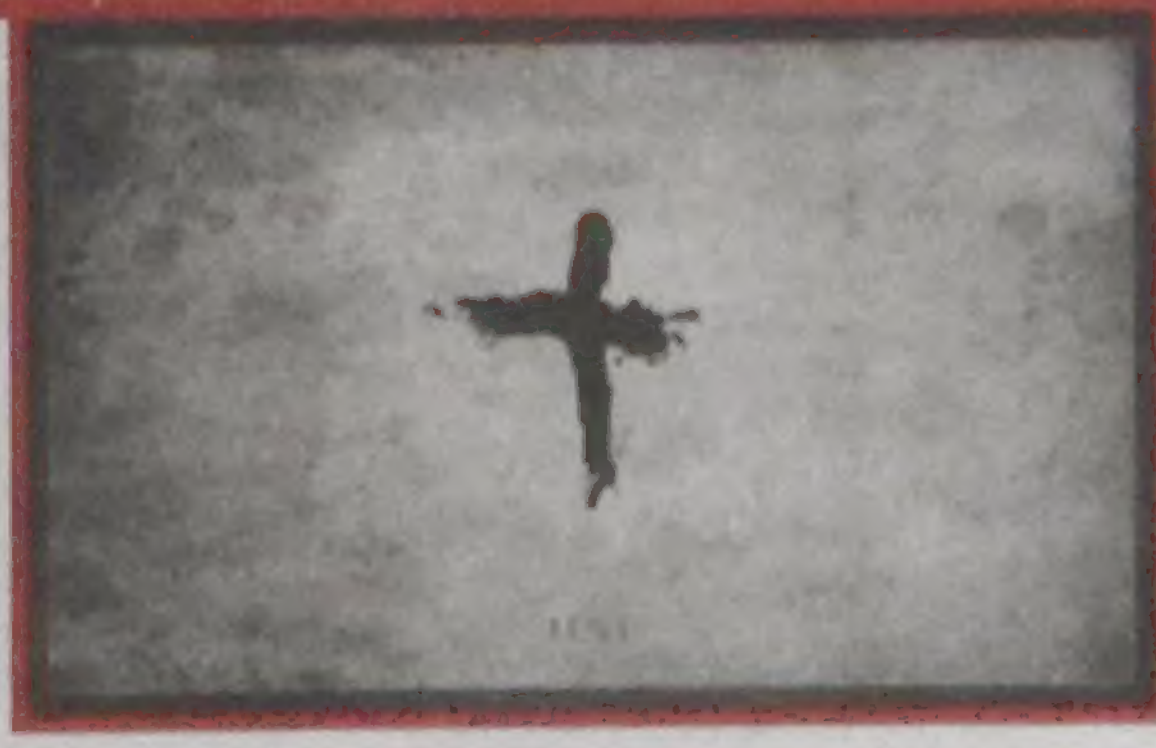




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Sharing the treasures of the Reformed tradition:

Bartholemew, Goheen and Seerveld on good news for our time

Greg Linnell

WAINFLEET, Ont. — “*Friends that I didn’t know I had.*” A note scrawled in reaction to a conversation with students from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina. The note also registers the weird way in which “Paideia Gathers” felt like both an introduction and a reunion: meeting Christians from other denominations speaking different dialects (“infallibility”) yet who were, to varying degrees, familiar with the jargon and ideas of the neocalvinist or reformational tradition which is my native tongue.

The snowfall and overcast conditions of the February 25-27 weekend were unable to dampen the warmth and enthusiasm of the approximately 70 participants at “Paideia Gathers,” a conference hosted by The Paideia Centre for Public Theology and held at a Catholic retreat centre in Wainfleet, Ontario. A group of leaders and leaders-to-be from diverse denominational backgrounds were brought together in order to not only be introduced to the reformational tradition with which *Courier* readers are familiar, but to also engage in fellowship, worship, envisioning and planning. The schedule of scholarly events was relieved by oases of liturgically-informed reflection and the sharing of meals and personal stories. Anglicans, Baptists, Pentecostals and Presbyterians from as far afield as California, British Columbia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. became more familiar with the treasures of the reformational tradition, examining



Catholic retreat centre hosts Reformed conversations.

LUKE WISELY

them in order to see what they could mean for their Christian practice. Those of us who had grown up in the tradition or who had adopted it and worked within it for many years were the grateful recipients of many questions, some pointed, but all aimed at exploring how this tradition could be a gift to the ecumenical community, a means by which Christ and his kingdom could be more fully known.

Treasures to be shared

Craig Bartholomew’s trenchant musings on Revelation 4 introduced the reformational tradition’s emphasis on the lordship of Christ over “all things” and the consequences of this vision of salvation echoed throughout the following days. In fact, it is the comprehensive and integral character of this vision that most excited the Baptist seminarians with whom I spoke. Coming to understand that salvation is not to be restricted to the individual’s relationship to Jesus Christ to the

exclusion of the cultural nor to be understood as leveraging something “sacred” into this “secular” world is thoroughly biblical and tremendously liberating. It means there is no distinction between some circumscribed areas of life as Christ’s (missions and ministry, for example) whereas others, in effect, are to be consigned to hell (law, business, art).

No less significant for the participants was Michael Goheen’s reminder that the reformational view of salvation is deeply rooted in the entirety of the Scriptural story – creation, fall, redemption,



consummation – and it is the mission of the church as community to live this gospel and to make it known. Reformational basics like these, found in Kuyper and Bavinck and assumed in more contemporary works by Wolterstorff and Wolters, were developed further by Goheen in his critical examination of Christian university and seminary education. Pushing hard on the missional purpose of education, See *Paideia* on page 2

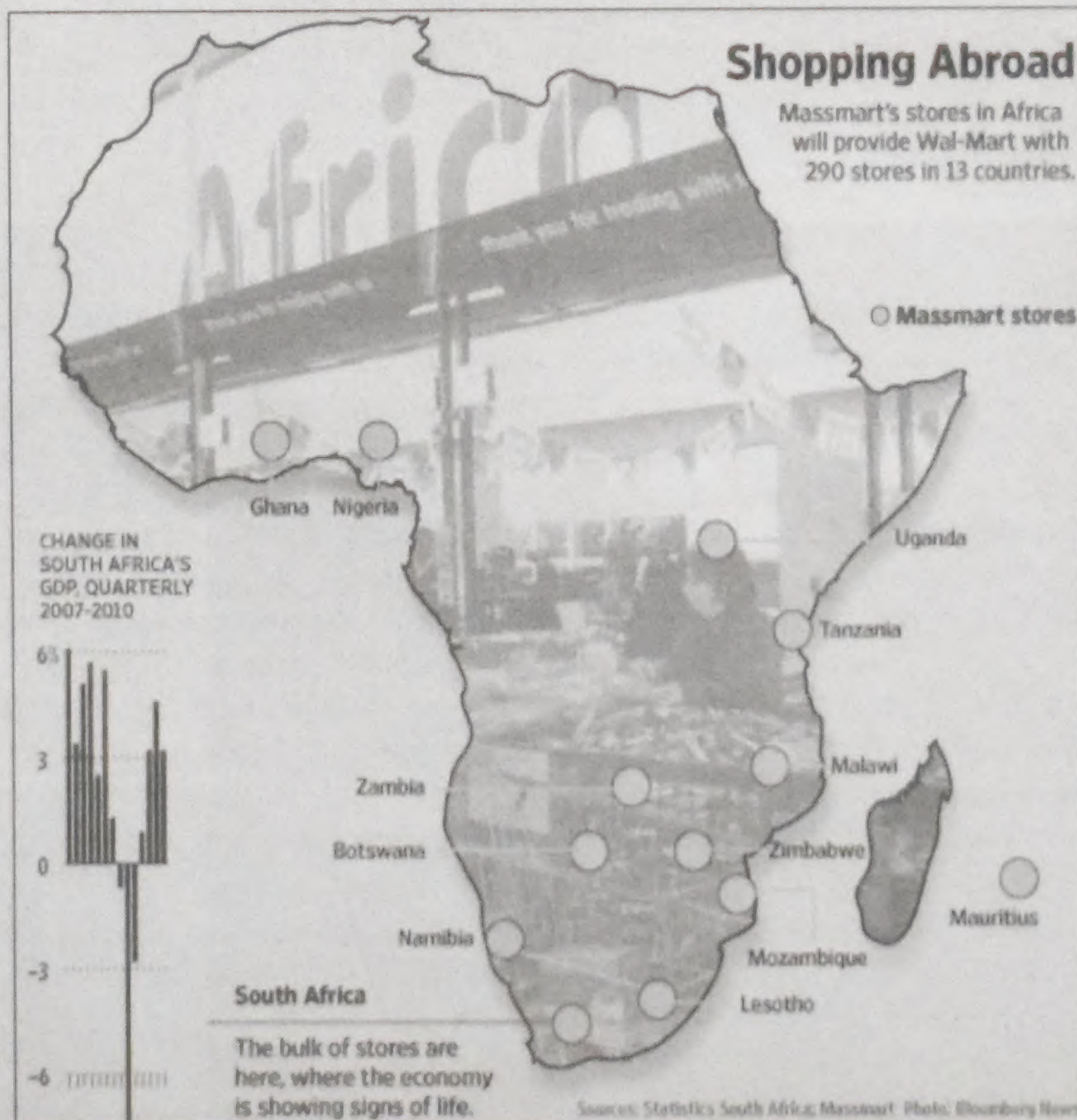
South Africa torn over Wal-Mart proposal

Emily Wierenga

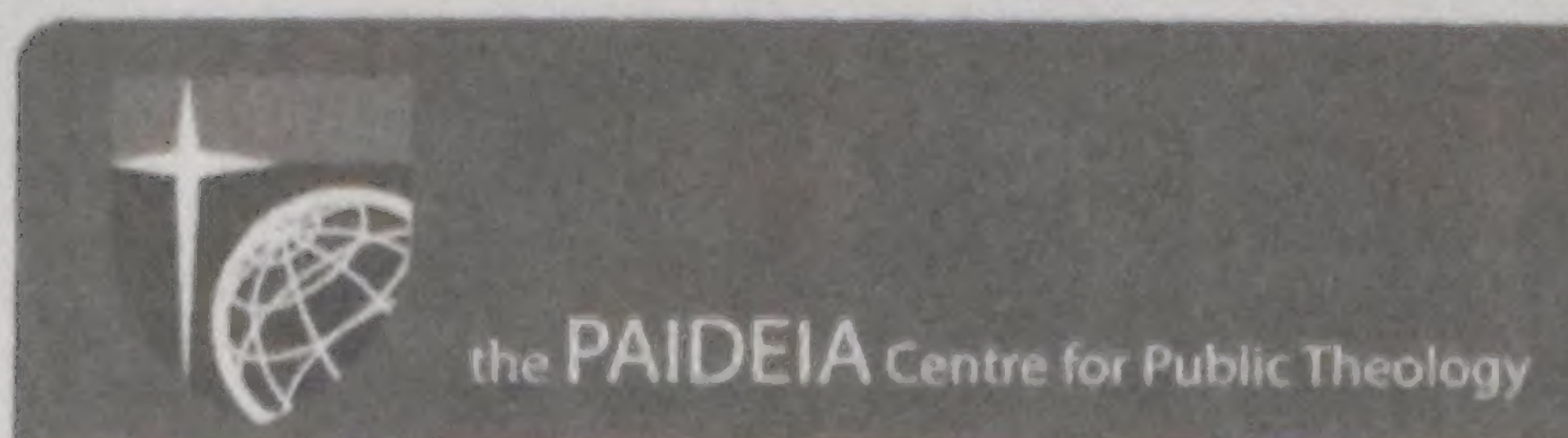
JOHANNESBURG, S. Africa – The world’s largest supermarket has taken another step towards establishing its presence in South Africa, home to Massmart Holdings Ltd. – a Johannesburg operation owning 265 wholesale and retail stores, in addition to 25 more in 13 other African countries. On February 11th, Wal-Mart’s proposal to acquire a 51 percent stake in Massmart was approved by South Africa’s Competition Commission, with 98 percent of the shareholders supporting the 16.5 billion rand (\$2.3 billion) deal.

The country’s unions, meanwhile, are fiercely opposed to the invasion of the Bentonville, Arkansas behemoth due to its reputation for being anti-union, engaged in cost-cutting measures and exploitive of employees in other countries.

See *South Africa* on page 2



News



Goheen argued that Christian scholarship is to serve the church's mission in all its breadth and depth and that our educational institutions and churches must be places where lay people are trained and disciplined to bring that mission into each part of their lives.

The final keynote, given by Calvin Seerveld, addressed and explored the relationships of artistic and biblical truth. Where some evangelicals characterize (theological) truth as something inerrant, aridly timeless and amenable to being reduced to a series of propositional statements, Seerveld pointed conferees in a different direction. He proposed that it is the literary and artistic qualities of a proverb or divine introduction which involve us in and more fully unfold for us the truth-telling that we witness in Scripture. That is, our encounter with God in his word is impoverished if we fail to hear and struggle with the nuance and allusivity of rhetorical characteristics in wisdom literature or the head-scratching yet marvellous ambiguity of Exodus 3:14. It is this biblical sense of truth as addressing not just our intellects but also our emotions and imaginations and bodies that is affirmed most gloriously in the incarnation. Christ's self-identification "I am the truth" reveals that biblical truth is far removed from an abstract ideal but is, instead, an authoritative and reliable word to be spoken aloud, to be received as good council, to be told as a story and to be worshipped and celebrated when made flesh in the Person who manifests fully God's blessing presence.

Treasures to be examined

The keynotes and small group brainstorming sessions were received as orientation, as indications of the hard work required by reformational thinking, and as challenging "good news," but they also served to generate a great deal of discussion and dialogue. Some of this was due to the various levels of understanding that the conferees had with respect to the tradition. More serious was the questioning of the theological waywardness of some neocalvinists (for example, just how do we understand the authoritative truthfulness of Scripture if not in terms of infallibility and inerrancy? Seerveld's presentation, in part, addressed this question). There was also a recognition that there was no need for joining the local Christian Reformed congregation; rather, the emphasis became one of finding ways to use reformational thinking within the denominations represented, to appropriate its insights and strategies in order to excavate non-Reformed traditions for what they might have to offer for the church's mission. What spoke most loudly, however,

were the undeniable merits of a venerable tradition of biblical thought and practice that is now far more intentional, as Bartholomew articulated, about stretching our gifting to meet the needs of others in the Christian community. And from what I heard and observed, the needs are tremendous: church plants and student groups are just two of the constituencies experiencing incredible growth. They are looking for what has been ours by birth to form the discipleship required to do justice to God's call.

In fact, it was this aspect of the conference which struck me the most. Our tradition is not to remain a secret treasure, a talent buried for safe-keeping. What these brothers (and too few sisters!) in Christ did was to kick me in my complacency, to wake me up to the gifts that the reformed community has received and must pass on. The friends that I didn't know I had prior to Paideia Gathers have made me

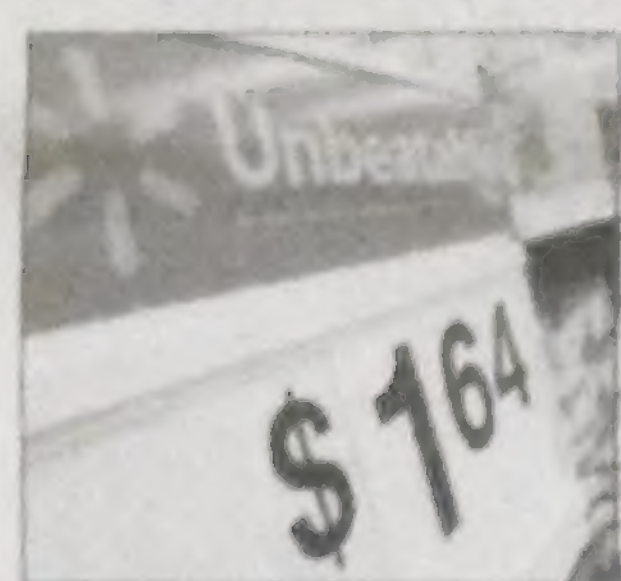
more fully appreciate the Master's charge of Luke 12:48b. For that, I am grateful. ➤

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Photos by Luke Wisely and David Beldman.



South Africa continued



Tyotyo James, a senior official at Cosatu – South Africa's largest labour federation – informed Massmart shareholders prior to voting that, should Wal-Mart's proposal be approved, his organization would "organize a mother of all boycotts against Massmart."

Cosatu's threat is not unfounded, with South Africa being notorious for its uprisings. In 2010, strikes forced the government to increase public servants' wages by 7.5 percent, more than double the inflation rate in a country plagued by poverty and unemployment.

Being South Africa's third largest distributor of consumer goods, the leading retailer of general merchandise and the number one wholesaler of basic foods, Massmart respects the concerns of the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) which represents 41 percent of its employees.

Villain or role-model?

Nevertheless, together with Wal-Mart, it has provided the council – which formed an "anti-Wal-Mart coalition" last year when the retailer first showed interest – with the assurance that no union agreements will be abused or broken.

According to Andy Bond, the former chief executive of Wal-Mart's UK subsidiary, Asda, who's overseeing the deal, the big-box warehouse supports Massmart's black economic empowerment program, and will aim to be a "corporate and retail role model."

After all, Bond explained, "South Africa presents a compelling growth opportunity . . . and offers a platform for . . . expansion in other African countries. [It] possesses attractive market dynamics, favourable demographic trends and a growing economy" (*The Guardian*, Sept. 27, 2010).

In line with its discount prices, Wal-Mart's majority stake – as opposed to its original proposal in September to own 100 percent of Massmart for \$4.6 billion – allows it to grow its revenues at half the price. Having competed, and won, against international icons Carrefour SA, Tesco PLC and Metro AG, the U.S. retailer is looking forward to monopolizing a virtually

untapped sub-Saharan market.

Meanwhile, with a 49 percent ownership in what will be South Africa's largest business deal in a decade, Massmart is able to retain its listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, allowing current shareholders to continue to participate in the future of the company.

"[Wal-Mart is] a great retailer, and we really are looking forward to learning something from them," Massmart's Chief Executive Grant Pattison told press, "[as well as] teaching them something about Africa."

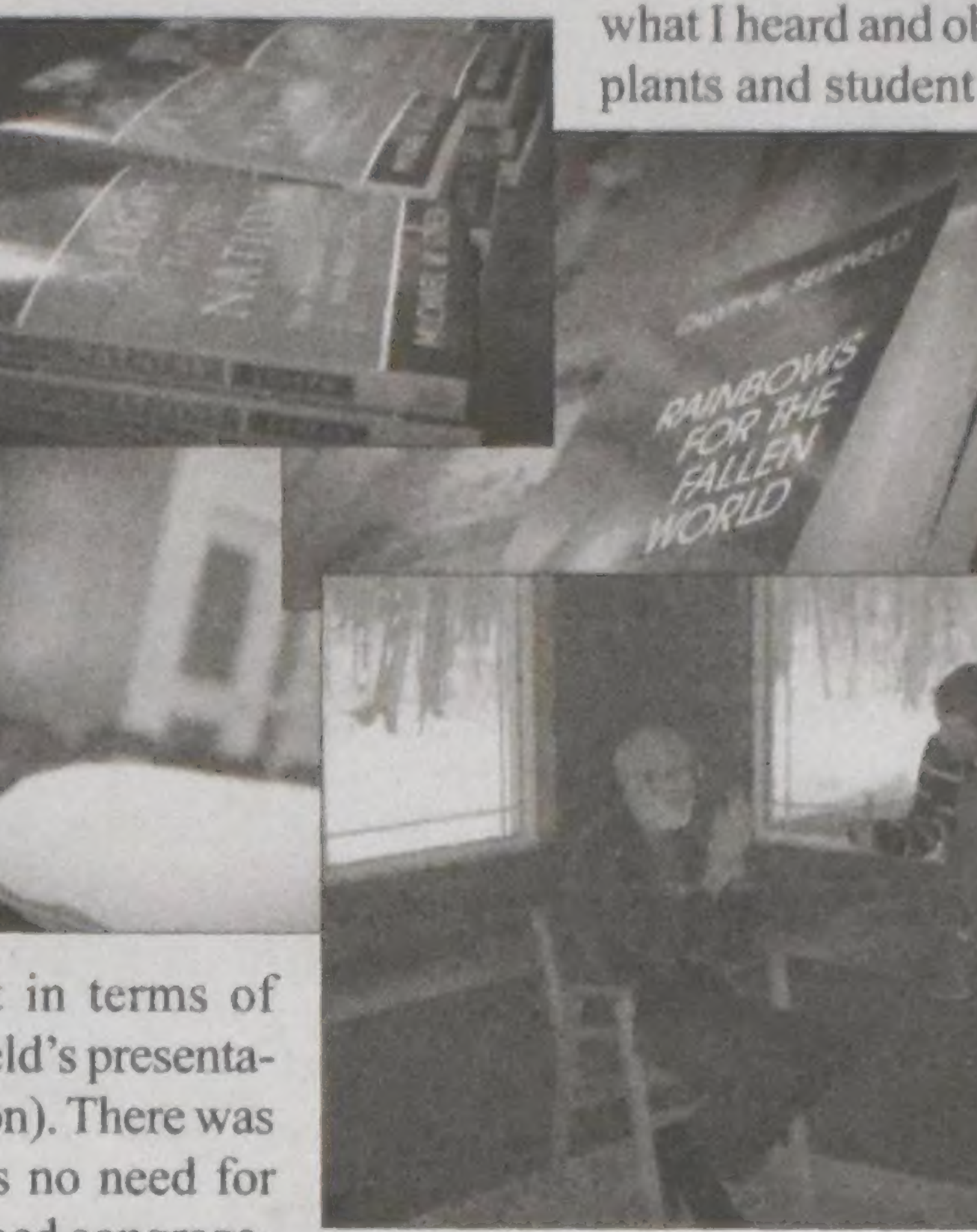
Yet the supermarket's abusive reputation is leaving union leaders dissatisfied. "We have empirical evidence from other countries where Wal-Mart is operating," said Sidumo Dlamini, Cosatu's president, who believes the takeover could lead to the loss of more than 1,000 jobs. "It has never done anything for the workers."

With more than 8,500 branches in 15 countries, 25 percent of Wal-Mart's \$400 billion revenue extends from international sales. Adding to this the fact that U.S. sales have been declining for the past five quarters, Wal-Mart desires more than ever to continue to "aggressively expand world-wide," said Bond.

It's this word, "aggressively," that scares the 27,000 employees of Massmart, which, until now, has supported local businesses and protected union rights. According to *The Economist*, "The American giant will bash unions, cut wages and drive more humane employers out of business, shop stewards predict. They also fear that it will source cheap products from China instead of buying locally."

'How can we help you?'

Wal-Mart insists its plan is not to change Massmart's strategy, but rather, "to put the foot on the accelerator." This will include opening 54 new stores over the next three years, as well as creating 6,300 new jobs.



"We think the proposed transaction will have significant mutual benefits for consumers, employees and shareholders," a media representative for the company declared following February's shareholder meeting. "Massmart is well-positioned in South

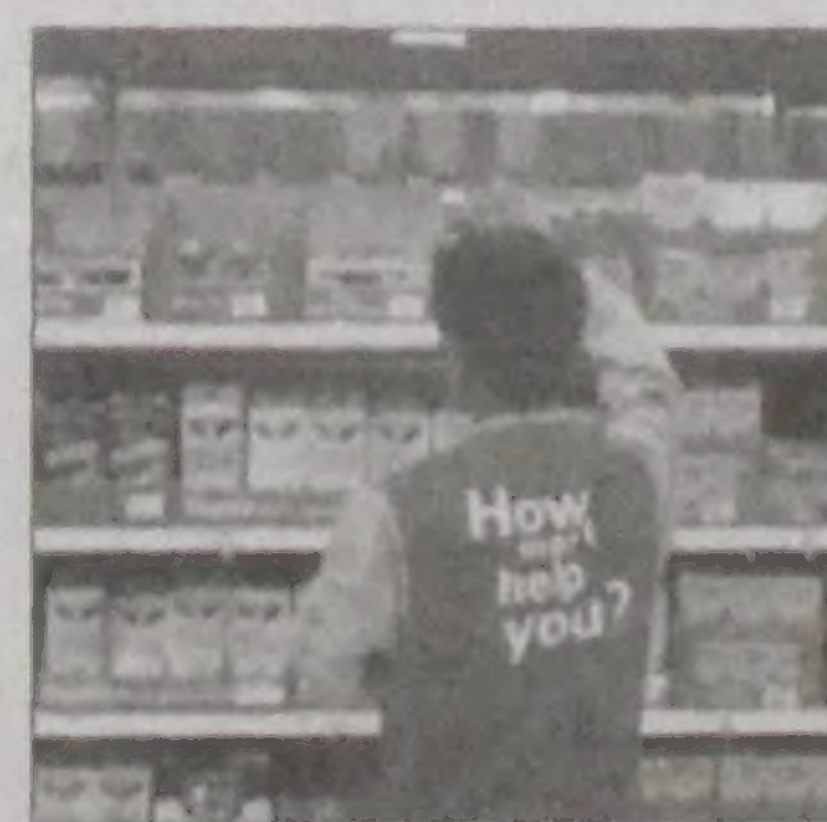
Africa, and with operations in 13 other countries . . . they represent a solid platform for growth on the African continent."

In spite of being approved by shareholders, the deal still has yet to be decided upon by the country's Competition Authorities. "Massmart and Wal-Mart have been notified that the Competition Commission has concluded its investigation and has referred Wal-Mart's proposed acquisition of 51 percent of Massmart's equity to the Competition Tribunal with a recommendation that the transaction be approved without conditions," Massmart's Brian Leroni stated in a recent media release.

Anticipated timing of the final ruling is unknown. "It is difficult to predict exact timing as this is largely dependent on the availability of suitable dates on the Tribunal's roll," said Pattison, who continues to engage in discussion with the SACCAWU in an effort to appease concerns related to the deal.

Wal-Mart, meanwhile, remains largely optimistic. "While the remaining conditions to this transaction must be approved and accepted, specifically the deliberation and decision by the Competition Tribunal, we are delighted that the Commission has recognized the inherent benefits in this proposed transaction for South African consumers, suppliers, associates/employees and all other stakeholders," said International CEO Doug McMillon. "We now look forward to constructive participation within the Tribunal process to enable a final decision to be made." ➤

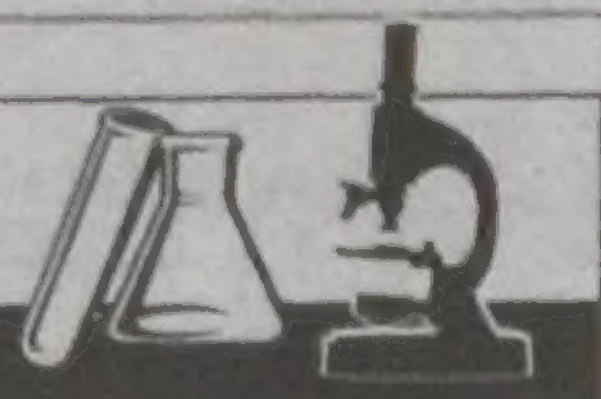
Emily Wierenga (wierenga.emily@gmail.com)
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News

From the Lab

Rudy Eikelboom



Calvin College, CAUT and human origins



In my January column, "Academic freedom and the CAUT," I wrote about the concern of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) over the constraints imposed on academic freedom at religiously based universities. CAUT argues that the faith test required by religious institutions as a condition of employment is incompatible with academic freedom; accordingly, CAUT has placed such institutions on a list of those that impose a faith or ideological test.

Since then, a number of articles in the *National Post* and other publications have addressed this issue, and faculty at public institutions have started a petition asserting that CAUT acted outside of its bounds, was bullying the religiously based institutions and should stop its investigations. The petition states that in the Canadian governance and legal system faith-based universities have a legitimate and well-defined place. CAUT has backed off somewhat as this issue has become much more public.

The February 14th CC highlighted exactly the type of constraints (although in an American, not Canadian, context) that concern CAUT. As reported on the front page, controversy has exploded at Calvin College over two articles written by religion professors Dr. Daniel Harlow and Dr. John Schneider, who argue that the traditional understanding of Adam and Eve and the Fall in our theological framework needs to be revisited.

New ideas crucial to growth

Controversy has arisen on two levels. The first level, disagreement over the research findings, is the sort that CAUT would expect and not discourage. As CAUT would argue, it is only by developing and pursuing research agendas that question long-held beliefs and traditions – exactly what society expects of academics – that researchers can help society to move forward in our understanding of our world. Sometimes these questions are unsettling and lead in a new or unpopular direction. (I will comment on the research question in a subsequent column, but direct the interested reader to an article by Dr. Dennis Venema, a biology professor at Trinity Western University, in the same issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, which discusses the science behind the controversy.)

The academic freedom ensured by tenure, which protects an academic from arbitrary dismissal, gives individuals who have earned it a safe context within which to explore

difficult questions and their consequences. If the new ideas have no credibility, they die. It is this constant questioning that eventually permits growth from which we all benefit, so tenure and academic freedom are of little cost compared to the value of new ways of looking at both general and special revelation.

Essential discussions

It is the second level of controversy that would upset CAUT: Schneider and Harlow are being attacked for publishing research that might be in direct opposition to certain statements in the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession, two of three Reformed confessions to which all Calvin faculty members have had to sign their allegiance as a condition of their employment (because Calvin is the official college of the Christian Reformed Church). To their credit, senior administrators at Calvin have asked the college to engage in a dialogue around the issues raised in the two articles. This decision is very wise because, as Al Wolters rightly notes in an interview in the same CC, these articles clearly call for a radical change in our theological framework and thus raise issues that require wide discussion. While CAUT might be surprised that two articles would engender such discussion and would be concerned about potential outcomes, Calvin clearly takes research seriously.



Wolters, professor emeritus at Redeemer, is reluctant to reconsider our theological framework, given the 2000 years of work upon which it is grounded. In contrast, I think we don't have a choice; I believe our Lord is making this change of framework necessary by the things that he is letting us learn about his world.

Dr. Wolters suggests that the two articles by the Calvin professors put the college into a lose-lose situation, but to me they represent the best of what our Christian universities should be doing: initiating discussions about our understanding of God's Word and world. These discussions can challenge and provoke us, but if we want to engage this modern world, they are essential. Calvin and its faculty are to be complimented for initiating what has often been for Reformed Christians a taboo conversation; but both CAUT and I would say, just don't shoot the messengers.

Rudy Eikelboom (reikelboom@wlu.ca) is Professor and Chair of the Psychology Department at Wilfrid Laurier University and a member of Waterloo Christian Reformed Church.

Two bloggers on Nigeria's upcoming elections

Goodluck Jonathan receives important northern endorsement

JOS, Nigeria (CSM) – Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, a southerner, continues to pursue outreach toward the north. In March, he secured the endorsement of a prominent northern politician, former President Shehu Shagari.

Mr Shagari said he was happy that as politicians like him become old, young ones like Mr Jonathan have emerged to take up the task of leading the country.

"I'm getting old and I don't think I can join any political party for active politicking now, but I'm happy that you [Jonathan] have emerged to undertake the onerous task of leading this country. I believe you will succeed, having worked so hard," he said.

The former president said even before the nation's independence in 1960, when the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was looking for an alliance with the Southern region, it was the politicians from the Niger Delta that volunteered to form a coalition with the party.

By invoking historical alliances between the Niger Delta (in Nigeria's "South South" zone) and the "Core North," Shagari has given northern voters a reason to believe that Jonathan will represent their interests even though he is not a northerner.

Saratu Abiola is a Nigerian journalist who blogs at Method to the Madness.

Nigeria's political candidates trumpet their religion on the campaign trail



LAGOS, Nigeria (CSM) – Here's the problem with my flying visits to Lagos – I never remember to bring my camera. So I couldn't take a picture of incumbent Gov. Babatunde Fashola's campaign poster on Lagos's buses. It's basically a big yellow poster with the governor smiling at you. Below his picture are the words, in bold, purple

letters: GOVERNOR BABATUNDE RAJI FASHOLA SPEAKETH.

Speaketh?

Don't you just love "God Sent Me" rhetoric? This is not nearly as flagrant as current President Goodluck Jonathan's "Vote me for the will of our Lord," but it's just as funny.

On the whole, though, I've found that watching campaign ads in Nigeria has been interesting. Muslim and Christian politicians in Nigeria like their religious signalling overt. Some of Muslims make the extra effort to be seen with Chief Missioners of huge mega-mosques. Christians ones, from Goodluck Jonathan onwards, make sure they're seen with mega-church pastors.

I wouldn't go as far as calling this religious hinting in campaigns a trend, though; it's pretty much just an extension of Nigeria's collective religious nature. But it's certainly worth pointing out/rolling one's eyes at/bursting out laughing about.

Guess which of those I'm doing?

Alex Thurston is a PhD student studying Islam in Africa at Northwestern University and blogs at Sahel Blog.

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Editorials

Time, wisdom and time



Jacob B. Vos

I sense that the Christian community is running a tremendous risk. That risk is getting a failing grade in its use of time. Let me explain.

There's a saying that wisdom comes with age. That's not necessarily so. It is possible to learn from experience, especially from our mistakes. But it's not for nothing that ages ago someone coined the expression, "No donkey hits the same stone twice!" We humans are capable of hitting the same stone again and again, and blame the stone.

There's also the perception that wisdom learned through experience comes more or less by itself, like a pair of new shoes being worn in. Without special effort on our part, it just rubs off on us over time.

The truth is that learning from experience depends on the desire to pursue wisdom and the time devoted to it. Without these we consign ourselves to living as fools. We may become well educated, rich and popular, but we're fools nonetheless, says the Good Book. For wisdom deals with the big things we all have to resolve.

No time for wisdom?

What goals build life? How do I handle the mystery of sexuality? What makes for a marriage that gets better every year? What creates a nourishing home? What values and disciplines do children need? How best do we use our gifts and abilities in our present setting? Since we can't live in isolation, how do we nourish ourselves, and allow ourselves to be nourished by a community? How do we respond to our weaknesses and failures and those of others? Even more basic, how do we recognize good from evil? What inner stance do we need to be drawn to the superlative values of love and justice? Above all, how do we come to know the right place of God in our personal and communal life? These all are inescapable issues, and every one of them requires wisdom.

Yet society today places a low value on wisdom. That pursuit has been traded in for the passionate running after the gods of money, sex, entertainment and, above all, unlimited individual freedom, a pursuit both massive and feverish. Massive because it is super-fed by the media, and everyone gets swept along one way or another. Feverish because its intensity is continuously stoked in scientifically researched ways. This pursuit is an insatiable swallower of time. The fear of missing out makes everyone run faster and faster. It demands more work over longer hours, ceaseless listening to noise, facebooking and twittering without limit. The telling complaint of our day, also in the Christian community, is, "I don't have enough time!"

Wisdom as treasure

How do we get wisdom? By going after it. That means devoting prime time and energy to it. The first five verses of Proverbs 2 graphically depict how to go about it. In each verse the act of going after wisdom becomes more intensive. Let me paraphrase it:

*If you accept wisdom as a gift,
and treasure it like a thing of real value,
if you tune your ear to it as if listening to your favourite song,
if you let your heart go out to wisdom as to your dearest friend,
indeed, if you cry out for wisdom with intense longing,
and raise your voice for it as if calling out for your lost little brother,
yes, if you scour all over for it, as for a cancer cure
and search for it as for a certificate worth millions,
then you will find both God and wisdom.*

To live well requires time to read, listen, meditate and share. Time to think things through, in a setting of quietness and a certain amount of solitude. That's the route to the great treasure of wisdom, the marvellous and satisfying gift of God!

How do we address the discipline of structuring our time to create room for the pursuit of wisdom? That's a huge challenge for today's young folks, for parents raising children while both have jobs, but also for the rest of us. Pulpits and shepherds of God's people, teachers, writers and counsellors need to urge us to spend time pursuing wisdom. For without making it a priority we'll be sucked along by a society that is destroying itself in its pursuit of insatiable gods.

Like health, food and income, time is an invaluable gift from God, a gift to be used thoughtfully, economically. At the end of our journey the Lord will look not only at how we've used our tongue and spent our money, but especially our use of time.

Set precious time aside to seek wisdom. It's key to the survival and flourishing of the Christian community. ✎

Jack Vos (jbvos@sympatico.ca) is a retired pastor living in Barrie, Ontario.

Racism: death by a thousand cuts



Bert Witvoet

During our stay in South Africa this year, my wife, Alice, our daughter, Marguerite, and I visited the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. The place is a stark reminder of that sad and ignominious time of racist ideology and behaviour on the part of a white minority who felt threatened by the idea of surrendering power to a black majority. Their fears were not totally unfounded, since it takes an educated and trained population to maintain certain standards of a modern democracy and industrialized country. However, the greater part of wisdom would have been to provide excellent education and training for the blacks so that they would have been ready to assume power through democratic elections. Instead, the white government passed dozens of laws that would ensure that blacks would receive inferior training and education and would be disadvantaged for years to come.



One thing I noticed as I passed through the various displays of the history of Apartheid was that the word "truth" was written in large letters. It's a big word representing a big concept. You find it back in the name of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee that

Bishop Tutu led under the leadership of the then president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. Truth was in short supply during the Apartheid years.

Justice for all?

I watched a video of former South African President Hendrik Verwoerd taken in the 1960s. He was addressing a large gathering of Afrikaners in what looked like a stadium. The place was packed with eager white folk who hung on every word he spoke. Verwoerd spoke of justice and of a "final solution," ominous words to anyone who remembers Adolf Hitler's desire for a final solution to the problem he faced – racial impurity. Verwoerd had a problem, too: the safety and future of his Afrikaner people. In his speech, he said he wanted justice for both whites and blacks. But in my mind his concept of justice was skewed in favour of the whites. His speech was interrupted several times by loud applause. His white audience liked what they heard. They, too, wanted a final solution.

I reflected on the fact that "truth" is usually the first casualty when people are engaged in a power struggle. And that is what Apartheid represented. The National Party came into power in 1948. There were pictures and videos of the Malan cabinet of 1948. They were all white men in business suits with big smiles on their faces. They had wrested power from the British, and flags of orange, white and blue surrounded Malan's car as he drove to the Parliament buildings in Pretoria to be sworn in as president. To stand there in the Apartheid Museum and watch the euphoria of the Afrikaner people with the benefit of knowing that this power take-over would not even last 50 years is a strange feeling. I almost felt as if I had god-like abilities.

Petty and not so petty

That evening Alice and I were at a birthday party of a black family in Pretoria, after dropping off our daughter at the Johannesburg airport. We briefly related our experience at the Apartheid Museum. None of the people there had visited that museum. Is it because the experience of Apartheid is still too fresh in their minds? Some of the older women began to talk of the injustices they suffered during those years. Much of it represented petty racism. They told us that when they wanted to buy a dress or a pair of shoes, they could not try them on to see if they fit. The idea that a black person would have briefly worn these items would have defiled them for white customers. The black women had to guess the size they needed. Once the item had been purchased, they had to keep it, whether it fit or not. The humiliation these women felt was all the more acute because they were highly educated women who had studied abroad.

Their experience of Apartheid was death by a thousand cuts. Petty Apartheid included organizing separate public facilities – separate entrances to buildings, buses and public toilets. But in the museum we had seen pictures of much more brutal physical deaths, by hanging or

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Letters

Caledonia needs reconciliation, not more repression

When I read the Feb. 14, 2011 "The Public Square" column, I was disappointed with Harry Antonides' article. The Caledonia situation requires reconciliation: law enforcement will lead to repression, not to resolution! A deeper historical perspective will be needed to establish a lasting solution.

In *The Literary Review of Canada*, I recently read "The Calamity of Caledonia – What B.C. can teach Ontario about Native land claims," by Christopher Moore, a noted Toronto writer on historical subjects. In conversation with a neighbour, I learned further that the Six Nations had fought with British forces in defence of lands south of the Great Lakes during the American

Revolutionary War (1775-1783). By the end of the war they had moved into Upper Canada into the Grand River valley.

This is how Moore puts it: "At the end of the war the British government acknowledged Six Nations' title to the lands, 10 kilometres deep on either side, along the full length of southern Ontario's Grand River, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever." The government of Upper Canada confirmed the agreement in 1793, guaranteeing the Six Nations "the full and entire possession, use, benefit and advantage of the said district and territory, to be held and enjoyed by them in the most free and ample manner" (Vol.18., No.3, April 2010).

"In 1784," Moore continues, "the Six Nations territory on the Grand amounted to almost 400,000 hectares. Today the Six Nations hold less than 20,000 hectares of their original territory, and it takes a strong stomach to contemplate what happened to the other 380,000."

The article reviews British Columbia's experience and notes that the provincial government "hosted the 2010 Vancouver-Whistler Olympic Winter Games in partnership with four First Nations whose title to the territories where the games were taking place could not be gainsaid."

"If Ontario had a case like [B.C.'s] affecting the status of the Grand River

valley, what might the law actually say?" In other words, now that it is settled law that Canada must accept treaty obligations to First Nations, can the cynical manoeuvrings and tortured reasoning by which Ontario justified its 19th-century appropriations of Six Nations' land survive judicial scrutiny?

Readers of Antonides' "The Public Square" need a comprehensive historical background in order to "awaken" and call for an informed reconciliation of differences at Caledonia. British Columbia's experience and success chart a hopeful pathway. Find the cited article at reviewcanada.ca.

Garth Cubitt
New Lowell, Ont.

Unbiblical trends at Calvin College

In "Calvin Profs affirm the 'Grand Evolutionary Hypothesis' for Christians in the Reformed tradition" (CC Feb. 14, 2011), we read that Bible and theology professors Dr. Harlow and Dr. Schneider propose that Adam and Eve are purely symbolic, literary figures and that there is no historical fall into sin.

On June 16, 2010, the CRC's Synod removed restraints on the teaching of evolutionary theology, opening the door for promotion of evolutionary teaching. Nonetheless, faculty members of Calvin College are required to subscribe to the three forms of unity: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt. But Calvin College's board of trustees has failed to enforce adherence to reform standards by Calvin's faculty, thereby belying its claim as a reformed institution. Calvin's biology Professors teach from an evolutionary perspective. Dr.'s Harlow and Schneider argue that the doctrines of Christ's atonement, election and eternal punishment need major revisions.

In the March *Banner*, Rev. Bob De Moor seems to imply that these two professors do not question biblical authority, God as the creator of all things, humanity's bondage to sin, our need for salvation through Christ, or the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, saying that instead they question the way

our confessions formulate the doctrine of creation, and how sin and sadness came to be.

However, Dr. Harlow says that scientific discovery clearly shows that mankind did not descend from a single pair of human ancestors, implying that the accounts in Gen. 1: 26-31 and Gen. 2:7 are simply not true. Dr. Harlow further states there was no historical sin, but that we inherited sin from our animal past; nevertheless, he wants Christ to save us from our sins. What Dr. Harlow seems to be missing is that by denying the historical Adam, there is no Christ.

Dr. Schneider also wants to take a run at the traditional interpretation of our confessions, which he says have led us to believe in the historical fall into sin (Gen. 3) by Adam and Eve. Furthermore Dr. Schneider asserts that traditional protestant believers are not intelligent enough, and not equipped with enough confessional ammunition, to meet the challenge to our faith as presented by scientific proof that humans have animal ancestors. So much for our confessions, which led, historically, to the CRC establishing Christian schools, Christian colleges and Christian universities.

Dr. Al Wolters, professor emeritus of Religion and Theology at Redeemer University College, in his interview with *Christian Courier*, rightly states that a theologian

must deal with science on a non-negotiable basis when science contradicts biblical or confessional teachings.

Some of our theologians need to take a refresher course on our confessions. Believe and know the Bible is God's infallible Word, and you won't have an issue with our confessions. Our confessions are a wonderful expression and explanation, testifying to the truth of God's word.

It would seem to me that if the CRC wants to uphold its confessional integrity, and defend

the infallibility and inerrancy of scripture, then we should ask Calvin's board of trustees to effect the termination of these professors and others who have deviated from teaching in accordance with the form of subscription which supposedly they have signed.

Our challenge is to stand on the never changing word of God and not compromise that word by going with the flow of science, which is ever changing.

Albert Rumph
Collingwood, Ont.



Racism continued from p.4

by torture. The Sharpsville Massacre of at least 69 unarmed and peaceful protesters in 1960 shocked the world and was the beginning of oppressive and inhumane tactics by the white government to uphold the "final solution." A second tsunami of worldwide outrage followed the death of hundreds of school children in Soweto who protested in 1976 against having to learn the Afrikaans language. Apartheid ended up showing itself to be the wolf it had always been, but now without sheep's clothing.

The fact that this unjust, racist policy was sanctioned by white churches, most of them of Reformed heritage, has done tremendous damage to the reputation of Reformed churches in South Africa and perhaps worldwide as well. The Belhar Confession became a much-needed document to show the world that racism of any sort is to be strongly condemned as sin. In a future editorial I hope to address the question whether the Belhar Confession needs to be adopted by Reformed churches in North America.

Bert Witvoet is part of a four-member team of educators from Canada who have represented Worldwide Christian Schools in South Africa for the past five years.



Entrance to Apartheid Museum.

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News

CRC to help Calgary's homeless

CALGARY, Alberta. (CRCNA) – The Christian Reformed Church and nine other denominations have joined forces to help cover the cost of housing for families at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Calgary. Announced on March 2, the plan is to move people into an affordable housing complex owned by the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) in the southeastern part of the city.

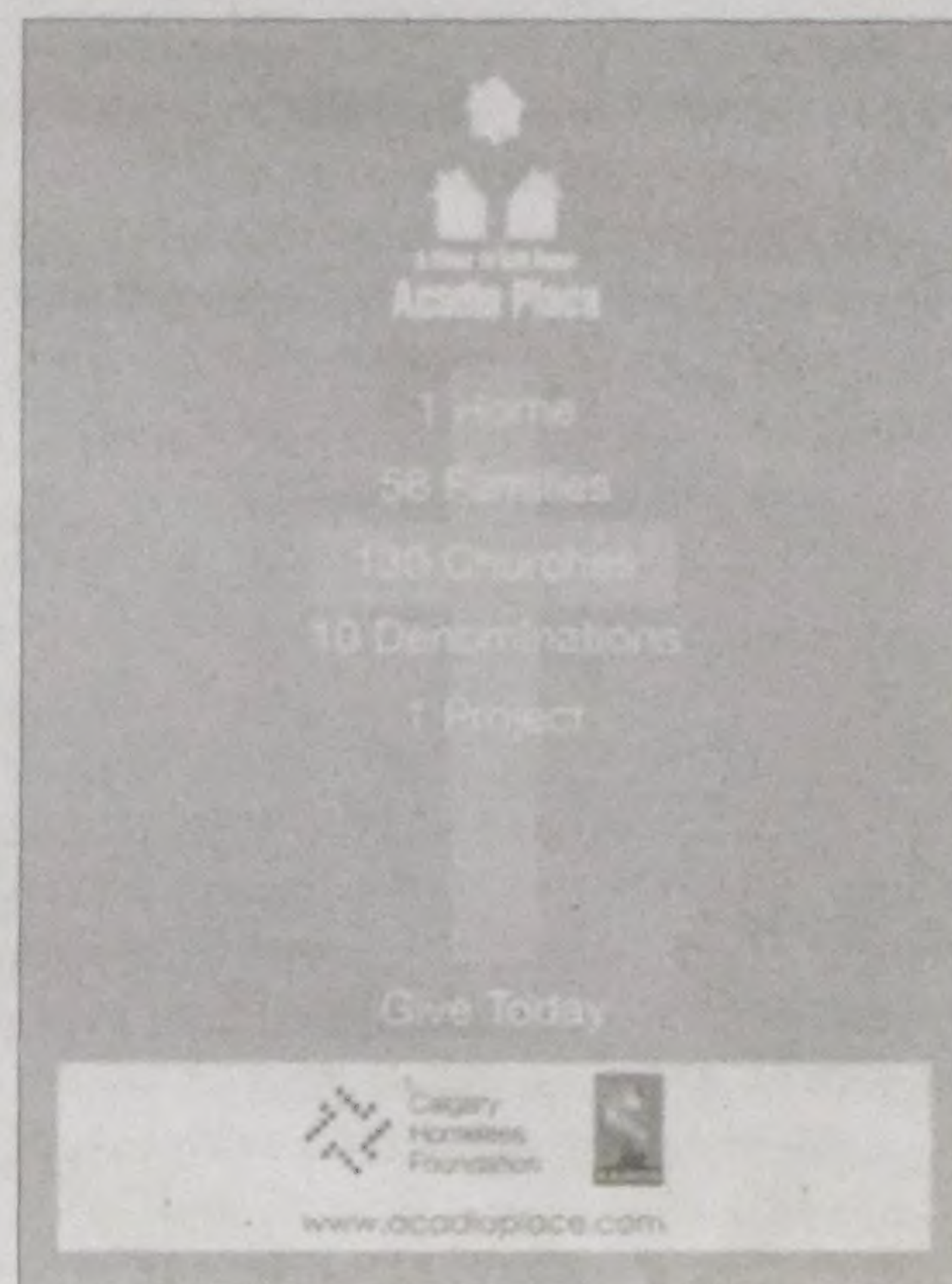
Besides the CRC in Canada, the denominations participating in the project are the Anglican, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Quaker, Roman Catholic, United, Canadian Baptist of Western Canada and Christian Science churches.

"The faith community has traditionally [led] in the response to homelessness," said Tim Richter, president and CEO of the homeless foundation. "With this announcement, the faith community is once again showing its leadership and willingness to step up to the plate to end homelessness in Calgary." Volunteers from the participating churches will also help by providing support to families and pitching in on building projects.

The fundraising campaign in support of the project, called "A Place to Call Home: Acadia Place," will see KAIROS Calgary aim to raise \$1.5 million to pay down half

of the property's mortgage.

KAIROS Calgary is a local ecumenical justice initiative, which links with the KAIROS national organization. The national organization sees itself as uniting Canadian churches and religious organizations in "a faithful ecumenical response to the call to 'do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God'" (Micah 6:8). ➤



CRC urges adopting racial hiring quotas to satisfy diversity

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRCNA) – The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church will recommend to the church's general synod in June that 25 percent of all future job openings in the denomination's top leadership tiers be filled by people of colour. That would make hiring practices adhere to the church's "diversity objectives," said the board.

The recommendation came in a report from the Diversity in Leadership Planning Group. The board also adopted a recommendation to reinstate the director of Race Relations as part of the Ministry Leadership Team. That team is the group of agency directors and other senior leaders who help set ministry policy and direction for the church.

Further, the report calls for 35 percent of the membership of all search committees to be members of ethnic minorities. Several other recommendations were adopted to help ensure that the CRC's human resources policies, job descriptions, and hiring and recruitment practices are "bias-free."

The board also accepted a recommendation that a new task force be appointed to revisit the mandate and mission of the office of Race Relations, "providing added accountability, empowering Race Relations to engage collaboratively with all denominational agencies, boards and councils, and ensuring that the

denominational commitment to ethnic diversity will be strengthened and move forward."

MLK rolling over in his grave

Not all the trustees were comfortable adopting the report. Rev. Scott Greenway said he appreciated the work of the committee and didn't want to frustrate them, but was unsettled about it. "Questions linger," he said.

He wasn't the only one who had questions. After the story about the board's decision was posted on March 4 on *The Banner's* website it drew numerous negative critiques. The first poster, PNR (names must be given upon signing up to post comments), wrote, "Hiring somebody because of their skin colour is as demeaning, condescending and, in a word, [as] racist as NOT hiring somebody because of their skin colour. So much for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of being judged solely on the content of his character."

PNR continued, "One wonders what the much touted Belhar [Confession] has to say about using 'natural diversity' as the basis for such things. Well, it says that 'we reject any doctrine . . . which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership

Egypt: New violence between Muslims and Copts

CAIRO, Egypt (AsiaNews) – Tensions between Coptic Christians and Muslims have grown following violent clashes in Cairo's Abbasiyya neighbourhood earlier this month. Father Rafik Greiche, head of the press office of the Catholic Church of Egypt, said that six people died and 42 were injured.



"Give us back our church."

Violence broke out during a Christian demonstration in favour of the rebuilding of the Saints Minas and George Coptic Church destroyed by Muslims on March 5. The priest said the country's military-led government might speed up the process of rebuilding the church to avoid an escalation.

Sources told AsiaNews that clashes began on March 9 when thousands of Copts, backed by a number of Muslims, blocked two roads leading to Tahrir Square, raising the ire of car drivers. Groups of radical Muslims came to the place and began a brawl with demonstrators, forcing the army to step in.

According to the sources, when Copts from some of Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods, victims of Muslim violence in the past, joined the melee the demonstration got further out of hand. "Tensions remain in the neighbourhood," the sources said. "You

can hear shots and many families kept their children from school."

Egypt's Coptic community has had to endure injustice and violence at the hands of Muslims for centuries, especially in Upper Egypt, scene of 21 of 59 incidents of sectarian violence registered last year.

Recently, the governor of Minya (Upper Egypt) ordered the demolition of a hospital for disabled run by the Coptic Church in the village of Deir Barsha. He gave no reason for the order. On February 28, some 10,000 Copts demonstrated against the governor, preventing him from completing the demolition job.

In the village of Saeed Abdelmassih, the same governor ordered the army to demolish the homes of members of the local Christian community after they refused to pay a "voluntary" contribution to the governor's coffers. ➤

of the church.' Setting a quota based solely on descent and other such human and social factors for hiring purposes would seem to me an implicit endorsement of just such a doctrine."

John Sturgis wrote, "Once again, CRC Leadership is more interested in promoting the doctrines of political correctness than in proclaiming scripture. Racial preferentialism is morally reprehensible. It's unconscionable in the church. Shame on you for bowing to the world's standards, dividing the church by race and hindering the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Dom_smc asked, "Does anyone else see the blatant inconsistency in the following two statements?: ' . . . Including the goal of having 25 percent of the denomination's top leadership tiers filled by people of colour' [and] 'Several other recommendations were adopted to help ensure that the CRC's human resources policies, job descriptions, and hiring and recruitment practices are bias-free'." Dom, too, referred to Martin Luther King. "MLK must be rolling over in his grave at how his dream to have a man (or woman) judged by the content of his (or her) character and not the color of his/her skin has been so skewed."

And John R. questioned the CRC's priorities, writing, "Setting up artificial quotas that are based not on the person

but are instead based on racial or ethnic generalities is insulting and simplistic. It is also, I believe, not something which is in line with our faith. Reading the article I'm more embarrassed that our denomination's leadership doesn't see this. If we've reached the point that decisions are made according to arbitrary quotas rather than the teaching of Scripture, then I'm not sure where our priorities are or what our future will be." ➤



While the board discussed the report, four people gathered in a nearby room to pray for the discussions. Faye Dundas, Geneva Hunte, Anita Van Zeumeren, and Rev. Sam Cooper, all from Meadowvale Community Christian Reformed Church in Mississauga, Ontario, traveled to where the board was meeting in Burlington, Ontario.

News

Bishop outlaws but parents defend Catholic school's punishment policy

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (CNA) – The Roman Catholic archbishop of New Orleans has said that a local Catholic school must permanently ban corporal punishment for student misbehaviour, even though many parents and alumni support the practice.

Archbishop Gregory Aymond said at a “town hall” meeting at the Josephite-run St. Augustine High School, “I do not believe the teachings of the Catholic Church, as we interpret them today in 2011, can possibly condone corporal punishment.” While parents have the authority to administer such punishment, he could not “possibly condone” the school doing so, he said.

Since 1951 teachers and administrators at the historically black all-boys school have used an 18-inch-long wooden paddle, known as “the board of education,” to administer punishment to students for tardiness, sloppy dress or other minor infractions.

A town hall meeting assembled to discuss the change attracted an audience of more than 600, including current students from grades six to 12, current and former parents, grandparents, benefactors and friends of the school.

“Hitting a young man does not build character,” said the archbishop. “My image of Jesus is that he said, ‘Let the children come to me.’ I cannot imagine Jesus paddling anyone.”

However, St. Augustine High School principal Don Boucree told the *Clarion Herald* that discipline at the school has suffered since the school stopped paddling five months ago. It has had to resort to a “zero tolerance” policy for unacceptable behavior. “What has happened is that the infractions that would have stopped by now have continued to rise, causing the severity of the penalties to increase,” Boucree said.

Don't tell us how to raise our sons

A statement published at the school website reported that the community “overwhelmingly supports” the punishment. Attendees at the town hall expressed “outrage” that “persons from a different culture,” such as an activist who had written from Ireland, were discussing St. Augustine's policy and were “attempting to undermine” the school without significant input from those affected.

“Many expressed outrage that African American parents have to haggle with non-African Americans about how to raise their own sons,” the statement said.

The archbishop had appointed Dr. Monica Applewhite, an expert in safe environment training and child protection, to represent the archdiocese on the committee reviewing the school's practices.

Applewhite indicated that the school's corporal punishment was both excessive and unreasonable and the school did not have effective safeguards to prevent abuse, which has occurred. She said that St. Augustine is the last Catholic school in the country to use the wooden paddle.

Supporters of corporal punishment had sought to submit a modified policy which would bar collective punishment and restrict the number of teachers or administrators with the authority to paddle students. However, the board of trustees rejected the proposal.

The local priest, Father Chiffreller, said the decision would be revisited and discussed, while supporters of corporal punishment said that the discussion was not over.

Archbishop Aymond suggested prayer and dialogue as a way to determine God's will and to resolve the issue. ➤

Dordt theatre arts students receive national awards

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa (DC) – Dordt College theatre arts students made an impressive showing when awards were handed out recently at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) in Ames, Iowa. Dordt received seven awards, 12 students were nominated to participate in the Irene Ryan acting auditions and one was selected to stage-manage a play.

Theatre Arts Professor Simon du Toit (who formerly taught at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario) noted that even amid large theatre departments from major universities Dordt's quality of work was clearly evident.

“Standing in the room as our several awards were announced, it was clear that our program did better than even many larger university theatre programs in that area. I praise God that our college was publicly credited in that way and hope that his name will be glorified through it,” du Toit said.

The awards went to:

- Susan Blom, for costume design, *The Secret Garden*. Blom is Dordt's theatre arts seamstress.
- Jenifer Kanis (Minneapolis, Minn.), for scenic design and painting, *The Secret Garden*.
- Mark Bylenga (Blaine, Wash.), for makeup and hair design, *Sukeroku*.
- Zachary Eggebeen (Sheboygan, Wis.), for conception and direction, *Sukeroku*.

- Danielle Roos (Sioux Center, Iowa), for direction, *Machinal*. She was also chosen for the Invited Scene Showcase, during which a scene from the play was performed.

- Joel Schiebout (Sioux Center), for lighting design, *Book of Days*.

- Lucas Wynia (Rock Valley, Iowa), Todd Montsma (Sioux Center), Hani Yang (Los Angeles), Tassneem Ibrahim (Abuja, Nigeria), for sound and video design for the senior show production of *Machinal*.

- Ellen De Young (Minneapolis) was chosen to stage manage the festival's national award winning play, *Las Hermana Padilla*.

“ACTF was an excellent experience that helped prepare me for the world of professional theatre. The festival gave me the opportunity to see a wide variety of performances, network with peers, and meet respected professionals in my field,” said theatre-arts major Jason Kornelis of Sioux Center. “Every year I come back from ACTF with new ideas and a renewed passion for theatre, and this year was no exception.”

At Dordt, students majoring in theatre arts can choose emphases in acting/directing, design and scenic art, drama ministry, dramaturgy, technical theatre or theatre management. A general theatre arts minor is also available. ➤

Guelph researcher: Bad policy will cause loss of farm land

GUELPH, Ont. (BF) – When a University of Guelph researcher began to study the agriculture situation in Ontario's Greenbelt, because of its proximity to Toronto he expected to find declines in traditional agriculture such as cash crops, dairy, hogs and cattle between 2001 and 2006. And he did.

Harry Cummings, a professor with the university's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, also wasn't surprised that “farming in the Greenbelt area is much more problematic [than elsewhere] because of factors like the cost of land, the feeling from urban neighbours that you're not quite doing what you should be doing.”

Cummings also thought he would find growth in “high-value agriculture ventures.” But instead, ventures ranging from greenhouse production and organic agriculture to ginseng production were either in decline or growing at a significantly slower pace than in the rest of the province, he says.

“Ginseng declined by 36 per cent in the Greenbelt; grew by 61 percent in Ontario. Potatoes down by 39 percent in the Greenbelt; down by eight percent in the province.”

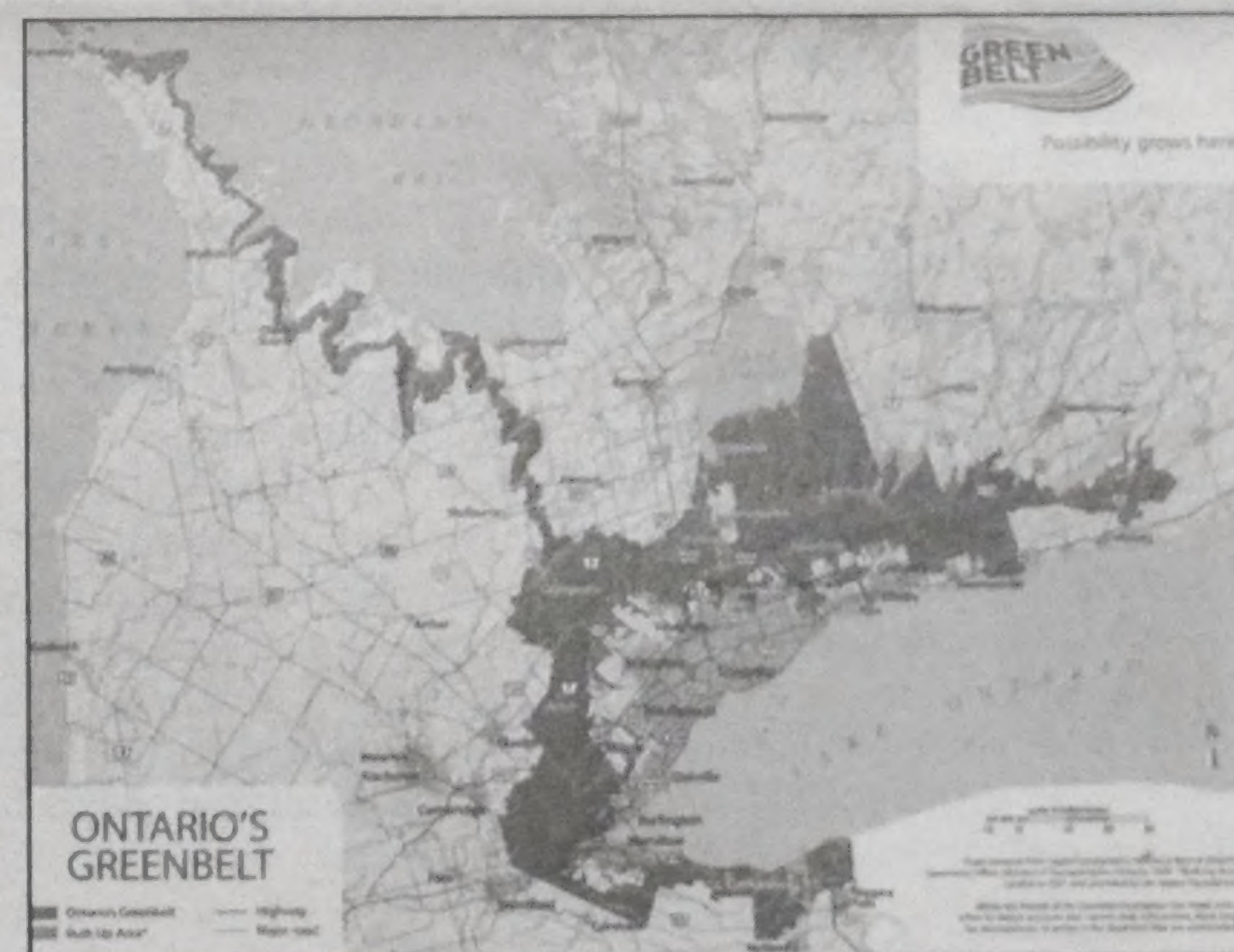
The number of certified organic farms increased two percent between 2001 and 2006. Elsewhere in the province, they increased a whopping 52 percent over the same period.

Farm and city don't mix?

While the average farm size is growing in Ontario province-wide, it shrank in the Greenbelt area. In 2006 the average Greenbelt farm was 149 acres, down two acres from the 2001 average. In contrast, the provincial farm size, 243 acres in 2006, had grown by seven acres since 2001.

Cummings wonders if this decline in size is because commercial agriculture “is largely fleeing” the Greenbelt and what is left are smaller farm parcels. “There are still some of those [larger farms] using Greenbelt lands but they're fewer,” he says. “And those are the people who are really mad” because of all the regulation.

Cummings' study indicates that 932,000 acres or 50



percent of the Greenbelt's 1.8 million acres is farmland.

His frustration with provincial agriculture policy is that it is not addressing the differences between agriculture taking place near urban areas and farming elsewhere in the province. That was a motive for his study. “If we don't get policy right for these lands, we're going to lose them.”

He applied for funding to broaden the study to include farm areas near other urban centres such as Ottawa, Hamilton and Waterloo but was rejected, he says. The \$25,000 he received for the study from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was used to buy customized census data and hire graduate students to help.

Provincial government websites say the Greenbelt's intent is to protect land around the Greater Toronto Area from development, preserve farming and protect natural resources. The Greenbelt extends 325 kilometres from the eastern end of the Oak Ridges Moraine in the east to the Niagara River in the west and includes land protected by the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine conservation plans. ➤

Columns

Patchwork Words

Melissa Kuipers



Is 'family-centred' exclusive?



"Volunteers needed," the bulletin announcement read. "We are looking for another couple to help serve coffee after church." Since attending a new church can be an intimidating experience, my roommate and I were relieved to be warmly greeted at this one. We were a little struck by that announcement in the bulletin, though. I couldn't help wondering – why is being part of a couple a prerequisite for serving coffee?

This is an easy oversight – it's probably just the way things have always been. It's convenient having two people, and let's be honest: traditionally most people old enough to commit to volunteering regularly are married. This generalization, however, is becoming increasingly invalid. According to *Singled Out: Why Celibacy Must Be Reinvented in Today's Church*, singles make up 40-46 percent of the adult Protestant population, and statistics say this demographic is growing. So if we're not seeing a significant amount of singles attending our churches, we may need to start asking some difficult questions about why. A simple way to begin is by focusing on the language we use in our churches and the assumptions that seem to underlie the way we speak about (or don't speak about) singleness.

I'd like to suggest a few practical things for churches to consider as a starting point for using our words in more inclusive ways.

Websites: This is often the first place people looking for a church will search. Church websites that prominently feature phrases such as "family-centred" can convey the message that this is not the right place for singles. Obviously family is very important to the ways in which we practice our faith, but if this is the primary idea we are communicating to visitors, perhaps our priorities need to be re-examined.

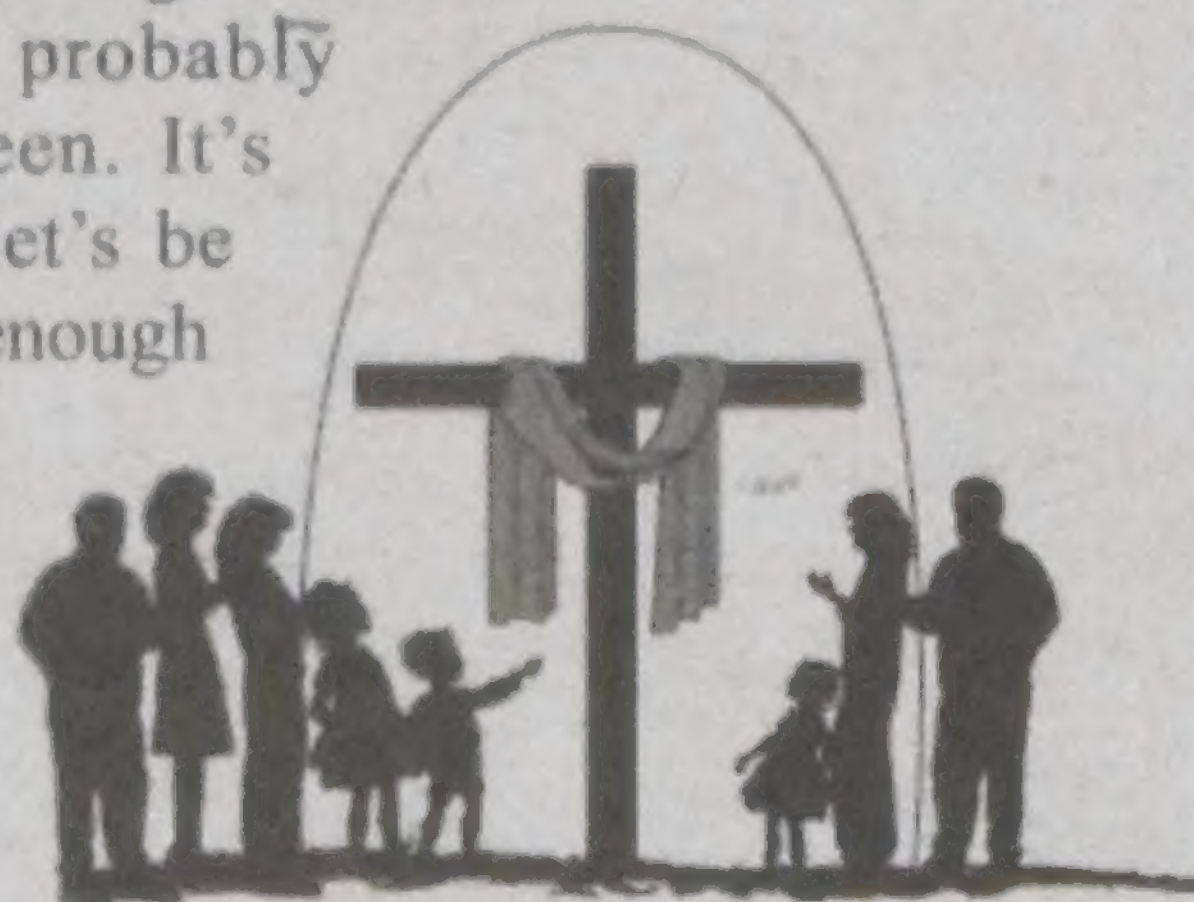
My home church has strong children's programs and provides great resources and support for marriages; these, however, are not the first things that are emphasized on their website, but rather its diversity and its desire to reach out with the love of Christ.

Bulletins and church announcements: One friend of mine was visiting a church and looking for ways in which to get connected when the pastor announced an upcoming fundraiser meal. It seemed like a great opportunity to meet people in the church, but the more the pastor explained the event, the less inclined my friend felt to attend. "We're wanting to fill up tables of eight," he explained, "so take your spouse and grab a few other couples." He went on for several minutes, suggesting different ways in which couples could purchase tables with no mention of anyone who might be attending without a plus one. This kind of unintentional omission can easily communicate that there aren't many places for singles to get involved in a church. Forge a path for yourself if you wish, it seems to say, but no help is offered in getting there. If we continue to treat singles as members of a small minority that doesn't need to be addressed, we risk not only excluding new comers but also pushing members away.

Sermon analogies and examples: One of the most beautiful Biblical metaphors is that of God's love for his Bride. But I've been in churches where it seems that this is the dominant metaphor we discuss, and God the friend, father, mother, shepherd, counselor and other roles seem to fall by the wayside. Furthermore, if practical examples of demonstrating God's love and forgiveness continually go back to marriage and parenting, we risk ostracizing people in different stages of life, and also neglect to emphasize God's presence in all facets of our day-to-day experiences.

We're used to presupposing marriage. But in order to reach that 40-46 percent of adults, examine the language used in your church. Are you giving off the message that one's worth is found in marriage, or that marriage is more in line with what it means to be a member of a congregation? We may need to go out of our way to intentionally speak and act in ways which convey that singleness is just as important in our communities as marriage.

Melissa Kuipers (mckuip@gmail.com) is completing a Masters of Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Toronto.



Many churches inadvertently emphasize marriage and family over being single.

Flowers and Thistles

Curt Gesch



Wolves



If you're a romantic, wolves are the animals for you. You can be a "negative romantic" and think of wolves in terms of Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, or by imagining Russian sleds fleeing packs of slavering wolves intent on the people as well as the terrified horses.

If you are a fan of Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, or Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*, you may be a "positive romantic." You may have joined in protests against wolf-culling operations in Alaska or B.C.

Positive romantics strongly support wolf rehabilitation projects in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and – above all – the Yellowstone National Park area of Wyoming. Or you may decry the decline in elk herds, or caribou, or mountain sheep in Canada and the U.S.A. where wolf populations increase. If you are a rancher from Montana or Idaho or Wyoming, you may be thinking of predation of domestic sheep and cattle by wolves (as well as grizzly bears, now on the increase in those areas).

Positive or negative, you probably have an opinion. Some think they simply follow the facts (neither Paul nor Apollos, you might say). But whose facts? Barry Lopez is a recognized authority, and David Mech is probably the most famous wolf biologist in North America.

For my money, I'd bet on Bob Hayes, a Yukon biologist who has recorded his eighteen years as a biologist for us in *Wolves of the Yukon*. Mr. Hayes (I'll call him Bob forthwith without his permission) is neither a positive nor negative romantic. He does not avoid telling us that he is a hunter. He does not shy away from recording his observations in cull operations. What he does share is his years of wolf research with us.

Bob does not share the results of his research so much as the process of his research and then meticulously records his observations. The process involves lots of slogging around in nasty snow conditions, cold weather, and – above all, you might say – from low-flying helicopters.

A conspiracy of ravens

Bob presents some fascinating, if initially puzzling, information. For example, wolves in the Finlayson study area killed an average of 13 moose per wolf when hunting in pairs. When pack size was four to 13 wolves, the average moose killed per wolf was only six, and when the pack size increased to 10 or more wolves, the average moose killed per wolf declined to about four.

Something was going on here. Were wolf pairs eating that much more? Unlikely, since there is a limit as to how much meat a wolf can eat per day. Small packs must leave their kills sooner than large packs. Why? The short answer is that birds with ravenous appetites consume the difference. Bob and



From fairy tales to Canada's best fiction, wolves are good at fascinating us.

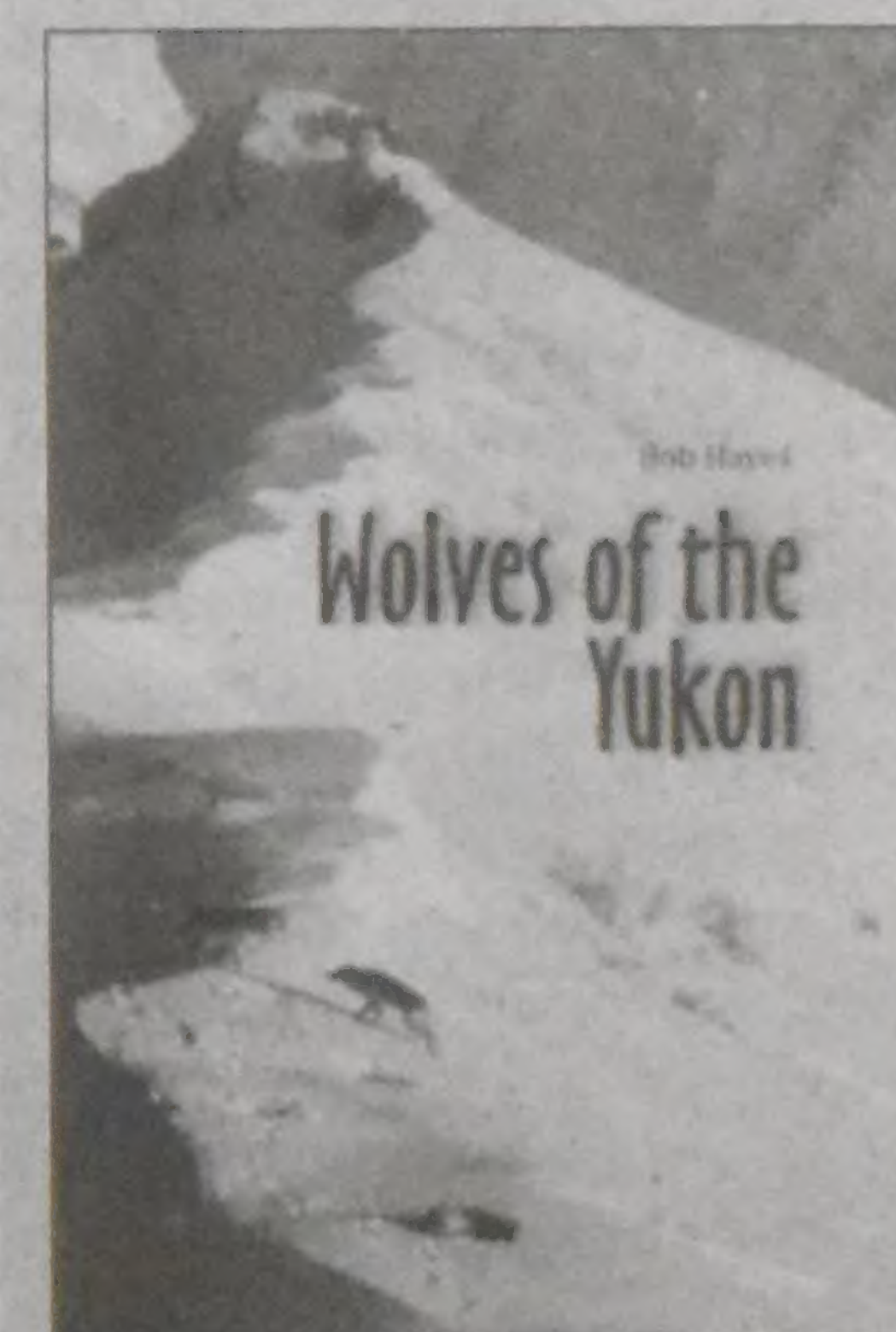
his team found out that ravens once cleaned up a caribou carcass that the biologists put out in five hours: approximately 40 to 50 kilograms of meat, "leaving only the bones, hooves and skull." After doing frequent experiments with wolf-kill and other carcasses, Bob's team found out that of the 270 kilograms of edible meat on a moose, a pair of wolves eat perhaps 80 kilograms of the carcass in four days. Ravens eat most of the rest: "up to 75 percent of the moose killed by small packs."

I hope these bits of information have whetted your appetite to find out more about how wolves and various ungulates (moose, Dall sheep, caribou) and scavengers interact in a relatively natural environment. If you buy the book, you'll find detailed maps of wolf kills, accounts of hair-raising helicopter rides, stories about collaring wolves and even performing vasectomies on them.

Bob Hayes introduces each of his chapters with what his website terms "narrative non-fiction." Stories. Each section of research is preceded by an imaginative, factual story that introduces the research of the chapter. Science made interesting.

My thanks go to Bob Hayes for being a passionate lover of the natural world, but also an impassioned recorder of controlled research and careful observation. Reading Bob's book may help readers be more appreciative of our Father's world, the one we live in today.

Curt Gesch (curtgesch@hotmail.com) lives in Quick, B.C., where wolves once killed a deer just behind his garden. One of his favourite quotations from Mark Twain is this: "The lamb and the lion will lie down together . . . but the lamb won't get much sleep."



To find out more about this book or to order a copy, please see wolvesoftheyukon.ca.

Reviews



Business: a Godly vocation

Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to be Fixed) by Jeff Van Duzer. Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010.

Reviewed by **Curt Gesch**.

There was a time when *business* was a dirty word.

There was a time when businessmen (*businesspersons* not yet having been invented) used to say things like this: "If it weren't for us, there wouldn't be money for worthy causes."

I'm not sure what the public perception of a businessperson is now, but I know that an *entrepreneur* seems to be held in high esteem as one who generates wealth.

Jeff Van Duzer, dean of the School of Business and Economics at Seattle Pacific University, attempts to make the case for "doing business" as a legitimate Christian calling, demonstrating Biblical accountability in business enterprise.

Van Duzer approaches the issue from the standpoint of Christian theology, specifically using a creation/fall/redemption/eschaton model. He sees business as a legitimate calling that can work a part in bringing God's *shalom*. Van Duzer uses Wolterstorff's description of *shalom* as the "human being dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature." The book attempts to show how business can create opportunities for individuals and communities to flourish.

Although associated with Seattle Pacific, an institution with Methodist roots, Van Duzer's approach would be recognizable by most *Christian Courier* readers as one that seeks to make an application of Reformed theological and worldview theory to ethics, economics, and entrepreneurship. One finds references here to works by Al Wolters, Nick Wolterstorff, Lee Hardy, although – strangely – none to Bob Goudzwaard, former legislator in The Netherlands, professor, and author of many books critiquing global economic systems, including the classic *Idols of Our Time*.

At its core, Van Duzer's book holds up business not as an enterprise that is "mine" but as a vocation, a calling from God. Repeatedly, Van Duzer condemns a selfish approach to business ("Which decision will maximize my returns on investment?") with this attempt at a concise Christian purpose for business: *Given my core competencies and the assets under my control, how can I best deploy my resources to (1) enable this community to flourish, and (2) provide opportunities for my employees to engage in meaningful and creative work?*

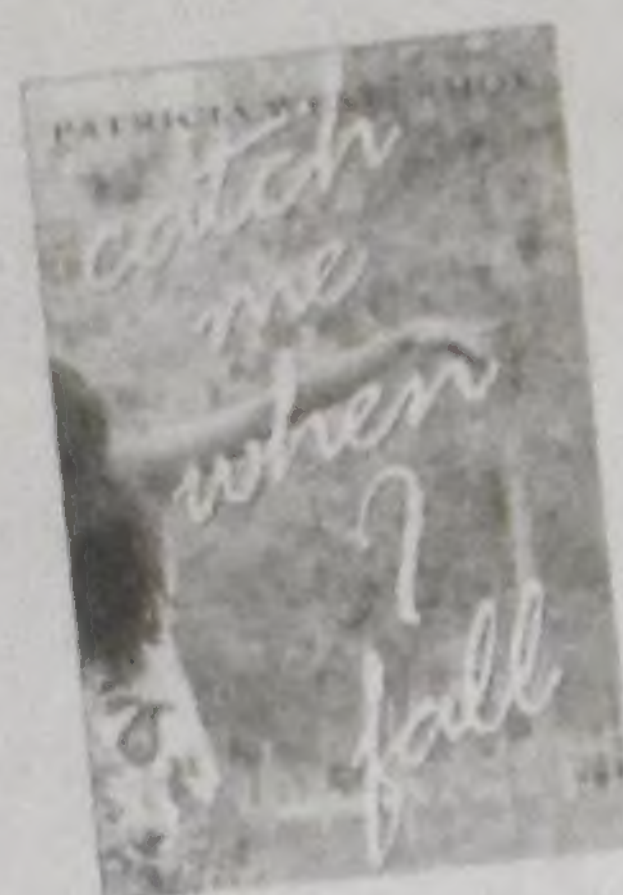
For grounding his work on solid Biblical, theological, and Christian philosophical thinking Van Duzer deserves thanks and appreciation. In my opinion, his book deserves a wide readership. I suggest that first of all it would make for a fitting outline for a small group discussion in Christian churches. Secondly, it would make a valuable textbook for Christian college "introduction to business" courses. Finally (and perhaps most importantly), Christian schools could profitably (pun intended) buy a class set of Van Duzer's book and use selections in their business classes, counselling programs and perhaps Biblical studies courses.

A suggestion for future editions: Include reference to Mennonite Economic Development Association, Bob Goudzwaard and the role of the Christian Labour Association of Canada among others.

One could give more suggestions for a revision, but the book *as is* is before us. I suggest reading and discussing it with other Christians and sharing Van Duzer's vision of the purpose of business with acquaintances whether Christian or not.

Yes. Buy the book. ➤

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Anthology explores a world of its own

Catch Me When I Fall by Patricia Westerhof. Victoria, B.C.: Brindle and Glass, 2011.

Reviewed by **Nick Schuurman**.

Set in Canada's West, *Catch Me When I Fall* is a fictional collection of short stories that lead the reader through the perspectives of men, women and children who are part of, or connected to, a troubled Dutch farming community. Two generations already have sprung up beneath the original immigrants, and each has entered a world of complexities foreign to the previous. These snapshots speak into the tense and at times awkward silence of some of the most difficult challenges facing the greater Dutch Reformed community today: frayed marriages, doubt, disability, homosexuality and the role of women in the church. Don't be misled, though, Westerhof is not writing a work of fiction to provide her

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two cents on hot button issues. It is a sort of commonplace historical study, an anthology recording some of the more ordinary peculiarities of the Dutch Reformed diaspora: the likes of peppermints, *Today* booklets and dairy farms.



If you are not familiar with the world Westerhof describes, a lot of the book might seem like a big inside joke. Indeed, through the telling of these stories, the reader realizes how much of a world unto itself

this culture is. I suspect that the audience that will be most rewarded by a reading of the book is that which is a part of it.

Westerhof writes with quiet intensity and an anthropologist's eye. Her stories are to us a reminder that the ideological differences that threaten to divide generations have faces. They call us to faith, patience and compassion. ➤



Autism, animal science and the common good

Temple Grandin, HBO, 2010.

Reviewed by **Herb Gruning**.

Be not fooled by the title of this film, for it has nothing to do with religious structures or buildings of any description, save for slaughter-houses. *Temple Grandin*, with Claire Danes in the starring role, is the name of an American woman with autism, diagnosed when she was four years of age at a time (1951) when little of it was known and mistakenly referred to as "infantile schizophrenia." This HBO biopic chronicles the struggles she faced cognitively and socially at each educational level.

At boarding school in the state of New Hampshire, she came under the wing of an empathetic secondary level science teacher (played by David Strathairn) who worked for NASA and saw in Temple not a handicap but a gift and encouraged her in her pursuits. Further supported by her mother (starring Julia Ormond), Temple spends the summer after her graduation at the farm of her aunt (played by Canadian Catherine O'Hara) where Temple's interest in animals blossoms. Her sensitivity to them becomes evident as she appears to know what they are thinking and perceiving and even places herself in their position by constructing a miniature version of a holding stall for cattle, used to calm them down. She applies this method to herself when she requires calming, for as she exclaims, "overstimulation hurts," and doing so discovers that it has a corresponding effect on her.

In 1966, following the prompting of her mother and aunt, she embarks upon a post-secondary career at Franklin Pierce College, also in New Hampshire. Her fears about social awkwardness and lack of acceptance continue at college, where occasional (and provoked) violent streaks threaten to be causes for reprimand and even expulsion. Continually misunderstood and her talents failing to be appreciated, her human-converted cattle pacifier is removed and torn apart until such time as she, on her own initiative, gathers the courage to demonstrate scientifically, using classmates as test subjects, that there is evidence for the benefits of her device. She did, and it had.

Upon graduation, she spends the summer at a cattle ranch in Scottsdale, Arizona, and develops a talent for reading the cattle's needs. She is reluctantly given clearance to attend

graduate school where she conducts research on proposing a method for "dipping" (removing germs from) cows in a way that is calm and orderly for the cattle and for which they would not require prodding. She completes the research and earns a Master of Science degree.

Often still a social outcast but resolute in purpose, she persistently seeks an outlet for her methods, first in ranch and then in slaughter-house settings. Her intent is to make the slaughter of cattle as humane as possible. Since we are going to use them for our carnivorous purposes anyway, she reasons, "we might as well treat them with respect." Undaunted by traditional mentality, she overcomes narrow-mindedness and revolutionizes the way slaughter-houses operate. She undertakes further research, is awarded a doctorate, becomes a faculty member at Colorado State University and educates the rest of us on the nature of autism and what a person with it can accomplish.



One cannot help but be impressed with and moved by Temple Grandin's perseverance and resolve. Yet the task does not end there. The film deftly draws us into the discussion about the value of persons and prompts us to re-evaluate our assumptions. It artfully asks us to consider the following implications: Who is gifted? Everyone – we all possess abilities to offer for the common good. Who is challenged? We all have our limitations, but we can either move beyond them or use them for the benefit of ourself and others. The committee at the slaughter-house, for example, represents a conservative element that cannot see beyond its conventional practices and in this sense it is challenged. How many ways are there to perceive and learn? Multiple, for not everyone takes in and processes information in the same way. And for this reason (here is the difficult one), how many ways are there to teach? Based on the previous question and answer, there needs to be more than one. Our approach to education needs to take in to account not only what others require but also what they can offer. The message of the film is if we are careful to do so, then we will be enriched as a result. ➤

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Features

An adventure with God

Brenda Visser

Dave Bouwers, second generation owner of Ford Electric, knows that his adventure with God is not over yet. When Bouwers first started working for his father at the age of 16, it was just a job. It came as a bit of a shock to him later on to discover that he actually really liked it. He never wanted to go into electric work at all; he preferred photography and nice cars. But today he feels like being the owner of this electrical company is God's call on his life, and he is eager to get out of bed every morning and go to work.

Ford Electric was established in Brockville in 1919 by Charlie Ford. It remained in the Ford family until the 1950s when Bouwers' uncle, Henk Breimer, bought the business. Henk Bouwers, Dave's father, started working at the company in 1954, and became CEO in 1990 until 2002 when the responsibility passed on to Dave. Today the company maintains a good balance of approximately 12 employees.

"It's funny," says Bouwers. "When I was growing up, I wasn't good in sports, I wasn't good in math or science, and I always wondered what God had in store for me. I was always a dreamer." Today he still spends time dreaming — about what the future of the company might look like and about other ventures.

For a time, Bouwers was a weekend wedding photographer and a weekday worker, and loved it. But the focus of his energy changed with the purchase of a home in Florida,



Building a Christian business presence in the community.

which he and his wife, Lisa, rent out to vacationers. Buying the house was a big change for them, and they prayed about it a lot. Bouwers says, "It has been a huge expense and worry, but also a huge blessing." In the process they've asked themselves, "What can we do for God?" They are putting a Bible in every dresser with the hopes that visitors will read it, and perhaps even take it home.

Bouwers says, "I always have pet projects!" His love of cars is being turned into the creation of a car club, where there will be monthly meetings, joint car ownerships, and more. This idea has just barely been launched, and Bouwers is not sure where it will all lead, but he is enthusiastic about the opportunities that will come his way.

On the job with God

"God puts these extremes in my life," Bouwers says. "God keeps putting this idea in my head that I should write a book." This comes as a surprising nudge to Bouwers, and

he laughs, because he typically never cracked open a book in the past unless forced.

A self-described "alpha character," Bouwers prays daily for his business. He prays that there will always be enough work to maintain and support his employees. Lisa is the Chief Financial Officer of the business, and they have seen both struggle and prosperity, but they made the commitment together to be generous in their giving, recognizing that "God is there through it all." Bouwers said, "We've lived through a lot of extremes in our life already. God's blessed us and could



Ford Electric project in Ottawa.

take it all away tomorrow."

After narrowly escaping severe injury when a large fireball exploded in his face recently, Bouwers is very thankful and especially acknowledges God's protection of his life. His love for his business and all the other "extremes" God puts in his path pale in comparison to his love for his family. "What I really care about," he says, "is providing for my family and having time to spend with them." Bouwers looks forward to continuing his adventures with God, living by faith. ➤

Coffee merchant says nothing is impossible with God



Luke Thomas: serving God and his customers.

Brenda Visser

Harvest Café is a thriving coffee shop in the small village of Athens, Ontario, where owner Luke Thomas says that he and God are accomplishing the impossible together. Thomas did not set out to be a coffee merchant, nor did he plan to be in business at all, but the adventure has become a "vehicle for his own faith."

Prompted by a trusted friend to look at a business that was for sale, Thomas says he had absolutely no desire to be in retail. On Easter weekend 2005, he and his friend did a walk-through of the property. They were looking at a Sears catalogue outlet, video rental store and ice cream shop all rolled into one. Thomas was not impressed, but a seed had been planted. He went home and, with his wife, began to dream about what he could do with a Main Street

location like that. In his spirit he knew "something was up with God."

In August of the same year, with zero experience, little capital, and a family to support, Thomas opened shop. Originally he retained the Sears and video rental aspects of the business, but today, five years later, they are gone, making room for pastries, wraps and a wide range of coffee specialties. Thomas and his wife, Susan, also do event catering for a growing number of clients.

Given the unexpected start of *Harvest Café*, it is not surprising that the couple have experienced challenges. Thomas acknowledges that he has "... been to hell and back inside himself" with regards to the business. But he feels that God is encouraging him to swim at those precise moments when he himself feels that he is in over his

head. And financially, although the numbers do not always work, God has been faithful. Thomas says that "... you have to be smart, but you can't make decisions based on money alone. It can't decide for you, or you will never do anything for God."

Retail ministry

The Thomases never intentionally opened the cafe to do ministry. Rather, Thomas admits that his idea of ministry was to build a solid business, and then go somewhere else to minister without having to be paid. However, by being very open with their employees and customers about their faith, he thinks they are undoubtedly ministering to others through the business. Thomas adds, "God may have different ideas than I do." Perhaps building this business is a

little like Noah building the ark, he says.

One way they witness to their Christian convictions is in their desire to participate in Sunday worship. Thomas says, "I don't really have an issue being open on Sundays, because Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, but I am not going to miss church for work. I want my family to go, and I want my employees to go ... if church was on Wednesday, I'd be closed on Wednesday."

From a young age, growing up as a pastor's kid, Thomas always wanted to have faith enough to believe in God and to do whatever he says — even the impossible. This is a vision he still carries. At the end of the day, he wants to be able to say that "I did every impossible thing with God. I don't care if I am the one who is the missionary, or if I am the one who is sending the money to the missionary; I just want to know that God used me."

The name that the Thomases chose for the business, *Harvest Café*, was very intentional. They desire to nurture a harvest of people and profit for the purpose of investing back into the kingdom of God. From this point of view, they believe the business is living up to its name. ➤

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Features

Be here now (and later, too)

Meredith Kathryn-Case Gipson Hoogendam

I've had a whole lot of time this year to think about a whole lot of things. July is the one-year mark for the life experiment I began when I left my job teaching English and Social Justice to high-school students in Woodbridge, Ontario, and moved with my husband an hour-and-a-half west to Kitchener-Waterloo.

Much has happened since that time. Jordan quit his job and started his own company. We got a dog. We joined a gym. I started taking my writing more seriously. I applied to graduate school. We took a photography course. I went to Arizona. We went to Texas and Oregon. We marked the five-year anniversary of our marriage. I took a rug hooking class. I took a Spanish class. We bought our first house. We renovated our first house. I learned how to make goat cheese quiche. I started cleaning for the Mennonites. All told, it has been a busy twelve months. And now, this

fall will mean grad school and changing leaves, first frosts and warm soup. It is eighty degrees outside, but I can already see the sky darkening and the flowers curling into humus all around me.



Sabbatical from employment

My decision to take a year off (until the publication of these words, obviously) was a very personal one. As I said, it was meant to be an experiment of sorts, but perhaps a different kind than one might first expect. It wasn't necessarily a financial experiment – my husband and I are already schooled in being “creative” in that department. It wasn't exactly a career move, although that was certainly part of it on some level. Frankly, when it comes down to it, I just wanted to see what would happen if I was given a whole year – a big slab of uncarved marble, a hunk of rough wood, a monolithic sheet of stark white paper – to play with. I wanted to see what would happen if I finally let go of the rigmarole, if I were to purposely throw a wrench into my own machinery, so to speak. Could I resist the urge to justify or romanticize my decision to those who questioned my intentions? Could I stand by my own inner leanings, when from the outside my decision might very well look like a purely selfish move? Could I listen to the Quiet Voice regardless of what it looked like on paper or in action? This was my experiment, and admittedly, it has been as scattered and hodgepodge a go as might be expected. And, despite the flailing and falling, it has been downright fulfilling as well.

My first and biggest obstacle has been the consciousness of my own privileged state. “They” (in this rare case, I'm sure I could probably track down a specific study or group of people if necessary) say that if you have loose change in your pocket, you are wealthier than 90 percent of the world's population. I can't seem

to get this statistic, vague and flawed as it might be, out of my mind. Most of me understands that one's quality of life is not necessarily directly dependant on one's material wealth, and that many “impoverished” peoples have a higher quality of life in many respects than the average American, but, this year especially, it has been hard for me to legitimize my actions when I know that so many people would give anything for the two-bedroom-running-water-full-tummy luxury that I bask in on a daily basis. And still others – and I'm talking doctors and lawyers and race car drivers – would give anything for the wealth of time and flexibility that I currently have. So yes, it has been a year of wealth for me, no matter which way you turn it.

Beyond all linear reasons and validations, and all rubrics that might quantify what I did, what I learned, and who I became in this year aside, I continue to have the pressing feeling that this yearlong life experiment was somehow *necessary*. Why, I can't tell you. How this year has made me into a better, stronger person is hard to say. I cannot imagine the reality in which I acted differently, nor can I imagine the consequences of doing so. Perhaps I would have landed the perfect job. Perhaps I would be more confused than ever. I don't know why I did what I did, except that I just had to do it.

Perhaps the most obvious conclusion that can be reached in light of this experiment is that the battle between the left and right hemispheres of my brain – the analytical and intuitive – is as strong as ever. If I were to admit to one concrete goal this year, it would be that I am desperately trying to trust my intuition as much as I do my analytical skills. Why does this matter so much to me? Why? Because I want a world where more people feel free enough to back away from the little picture and gauge their reality through a less reductionist lens. I want to believe that it is possible to find happiness and security in a lifestyle that prioritizes values over financial stability or social mores. I want to believe that it is possible to live by one's ideals, despite the cynics who will write such a philosophy off as selfish, immature or misguided. I want to believe that there are still people out there who are willing to do what they feel in their hearts that they must do, regardless of how misunderstood and misjudged they will be because of it. And so I figured if I want all of this to be true in the world, then I'd darn well better start living like I mean it.

Passing love on the way

In that same spirit and one year later, I am now trying to steer clear of a way of thinking that forces me to come up with an outcome, a conclusion, or a list of goals achieved for this year “away” from nine to five society. I don't rest easy on the tales of Thoreau and his famed Walden Pond; rather, I rejoice in the rumours that he went to town often during that time, buying food and supplies and talking the ears off the townspeople. We're human, after all, and ideologies are proven through our failed



Free to be.

attempts to manifest them in our lives. Once again, the exception proves the rule, and it seems it's ours to choose which rules we want to live by. We are here to live on this earth, and whether we live fully or partially, unconsciously or intentionally, is up to us. Our realities do not consist of fixed marks of the pains and pleasures that will happen to us on this earth, our fates not fat bowling balls thrown at us from the strong sweaty arm of Ms. Destiny. We are not thick-headed, automaton zombies. We are pilgrims here, capable of much joy and mirth, gifted with the capacity to pass such Love around to those we come in contact with. So yeah, if I have to encapsulate my year of learning into one rigid box, I'd say that was what it was all about: bearing witness to the bloody battle between the automaton and the pilgrim inside me, and doing everything I could do to cheer on the pilgrim.

Fact is, I really don't want to waste my time here. I could be gone tomorrow, and I don't want to die with a heart consumed by credit card bills and old dirty grudges. I could live another 90 years, and the sentiment would be the same. Life is but a breath, and I want to feel it hot and musky on my frame, not trapped impotently in lungs clogged with fearful self-preservation. So what have I learned this year? Same thing I always knew, I guess, but I sure needed a refresher: BE HERE NOW, Katie. And when NOW is over, be here then, too.

Meredith lives in Kitchener, Ontario with her husband and two wily dogs, Willow and Howard. She can be reached at: khoogendam@gmail.com. Reprinted with permission from



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Open to possibilities.

Comment

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Send your comments to cathy@christiancourier.ca.

A proposal to proceed modestly

Once again, a CRC agency, the CRWRC, has made a serious and costly error and been less than forthcoming about what has happened. Something similar happened at the turn of the century, when some CRC church agencies put millions at risk through an investment vehicle called IRM.

Now it's KAIROS. The CRWRC sent a panicked letter to all CRC members several months ago. Changes within CIDA meant we would lose matching funding for the better part of a year. I wrote my MP and asked for help. He wondered if this was tied up with the KAIROS issue. I re-read the mailing, saw that it said nothing about KAIROS and replied, "No, it has nothing to do with that; the CRWRC is all about overseas aid and not about advocacy or lobbying." I reiterated that, no doubt, the CRWRC was mistakenly caught up in some bureaucratic rule changes.

In fact, I was wrong. The 2010 CRWRC report to Synod expressly states, "In Canada, the CRWRC continues to work with KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives on their climate change campaign." So there you have it. It's not an accident. The federal government has made it clear for years that it will not fund organizations which either sue (the Court Challenges Program – cancelled) or lobby government. The leaders of the CRWRC nonetheless chose to maintain an alliance with KAIROS.

Some think it a badge of honour to be penalized for doing what is right, but I don't want my charitable donations and matching tax dollars to fund government lobbying. It's a debate worth having, but regardless of your position, surely we can expect church-related organizations to be forthright in their communications. The letter we received makes the entire CIDA affair sound like the federal bureaucracy merely tweaked its forms, altered its deadlines and inadvertently caught the CRWRC in the squeeze. That may not be the entire story.

Time to review priorities?

No good crisis should go to waste. The reduced funding may serve as a catalyst for the CRWRC to review its priorities. By its own count in 2009, the CRWRC has served 4,502 communities, addressed disasters in 24 countries, served 700,000 people by way of relief programs and, in all, touched the lives of 1.6 million people.

Aids in South Africa? We're on it. Shingles blown off your roof in Arkansas? We're there for you. Composting in Guatemala, drilling wells in Sudan, literacy

efforts – there seems to be no limit to what we are doing or where we are doing it.

Some may read this litany of statistics and praise God for using us in marvellous ways. Clearly this breadth of assistance is a credit to the dedication of so many individuals who have made the CRWRC a globally respected organization. Others, like me, may read the same list and conclude that for a small denomination with a similarly small budget pool, this can't possibly be a coherent and efficient manner of delivering aid. How did it come to pass?

The answer is tucked away in the report to Synod: CRWRC has used \$6,000,000 in donations to obtain another \$14,000,000 in matching government funds (USA and Canada). The television screen delivers a disaster of the week to our living rooms, CRWRC ramps up its appeals for aid, we respond en masse, other taxpayers match it and off we go. We're not the only ones doing this; scores of faith-based organizations are doing the same. At what point does this become the tail wagging the dog?

I doubt that the CRC, a denomination numbering only 200,000, can possibly intervene meaningfully in the lives of 1.6 million people. And if the encounter is not meaningful, what is the point?

About 25 years ago, Christian Reformed World Missions focused its attention on one nation, Sierra Leone. A civil war ended that, but I liked the concept. Would it be possible for the CRWRC to do the same? Adopt a region in, say, Mexico, and make that our area of concentration? Commit to well-planned and purposeful work in one area only. Travel costs would plummet, administrative overhead would be reduced, and we would deal with only one foreign language. Gradually the denomination – Serve groups, retired volunteers and everyone in between – could develop a sense of ownership and loyalty about this specific mission and generations could invest in a coherent Christian project.

In his meditation on the Incarnation, poet Robert Frost wrote of "spirit charging into earth." So too, I imagine a singular and effective mission effort charging into one area of this earth and doing justice there. Meaningfully. ✞

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Virtual empathy and actual comfort, from Tucson to Haiti

Paul Vander Klay

Just as the great eye of market-driven American media attention was ready to settle on Haiti for the one-year anniversary of the earthquake, it was wrenched west to Tucson, Arizona, to focus on the shooting.

President Obama as eulogist in chief displayed some of the qualities he was elected for as he spoke with compassion and eloquence to comfort the victim's friends and families, celebrate the heroes and encourage the rest of us whose experience of this tragedy is more virtual and abstract. Meanwhile, the tenor of the reports from Haiti is regrettably predictable. The results of last year's massive effort launched with so much enthusiasm fail to meet our expectations.

Be a saviour for pennies a day

A video by Franklin Graham and Sarah Palin from Samaritan's Purse hit me especially hard. This is a gig I used to do. The enormously selective lens flattens the complex truth into one emotional appeal for what I assume to be a very good cause. Smiles on children's faces receiving packages from the U.S. Sick patients being rescued by medical workers that look like the target group of desired benefactors: "You can be a saviour for a small monthly pledge, less than what you spend for latte."

Our credentials as saviors crumble with abandoned homes remaining in Port au Prince, New Orleans, Pakistan and Detroit. As I listened to the President's pitch-perfect delivery of the speech, the occasion demanded I wrestle with my own doubts and cynicism. I wonder how much of this virtual interest and empathy isn't a result of our own narcissistic need to be a savior. Chuck De Groat on his blog describes the narcissist this way.

In his friendships, you find him boasting of his accomplishments, but rarely interested in your life or struggles. He is disconnected from his own pain, insecurity and fear. And ultimately, this is what narcissism reveals. Manifesting in power, a lack of empathy, a sense of superiority, a cynicism about failure, a penchant to succeed, the narcissist cannot fail, in his work, in his relationships, in his friendships. And yet, underneath his powerful and impressive exterior, he is

deeply insecure. He doesn't know this. We can only pray he realizes it in time. But nevertheless, it's there. He cannot fail. He cannot become what he despises – powerless, ashamed.

The admonishing drums of our political discourse repeat "in this we cannot fail," yet fail we do. Every failure is met with another call for renewed commitment and effort, but this approach to our own desire for mastery and perfection reinforces the delusion of our own power and our capacity to define "the good." We stand with Eve pondering the fruit, once again not knowing good and evil.

At this point in my journey I meet the core of the gospel. Is the gospel fundamentally good advice to once again engage in a cycle of self-critique and self-motivation, to try harder and better next time? That is not a bad cycle and it is one that we must engage in. Gospel, however, is good news and it goes beyond these admonitions to the record of a gift, the pledge of flesh from Creation 2.0 and the promised final gift to come. The gospel creates the context in which our failing efforts do not lead us to despair or narcissistic delusion, but are translated into our participation in the age to come.

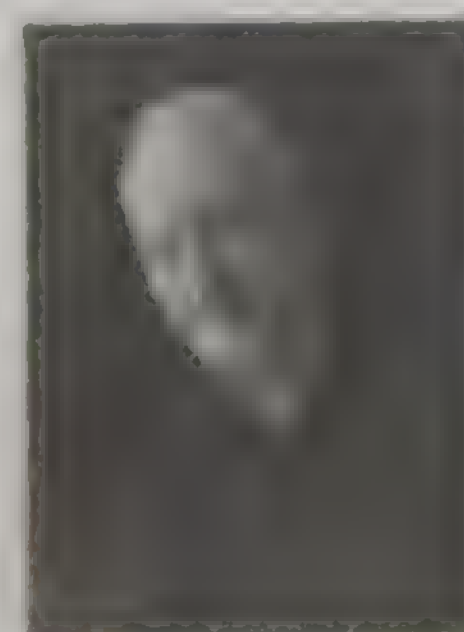
I was thrilled that the President quoted Psalm 46 in his speech, but he seemed to use the words as mere comforting adornment. Read the whole Psalm. The locus of our hope in that Psalm is not renewed moral effort on our part but rather the presence of the maker of heaven and earth living in our midst. The man of sorrows knows ours, too. Christian hope is not a delusion of our own power ironically fueled by denial. Rather, it is energetic engagement, because the promised renewal of all things invites even our stumbling attempts at participation in the anticipated great feast of the age to come. ✞

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Read more on his blog:

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Columns

Artful Eye

Lamb of God



The Son of Man, 1951 by Hungarian artist Molnár C. Pál, 1894-1981.

Lots of sheep wandering around wondering if the grass is greener or leaner on the other side where other sheep abide.

Sheep sometimes make a bleating sound of music. Lots of lambs prancing enhancing life for us, too.

Lots of goats in view.

But only one Lamb of God.

Lots of movie stars computer gurus accountants baseball batters slippery flatterers clap-trap-clatterers things that matter

things that shatter but however odd among all the political lords and religious smorgasbords only one Lamb of God.

Lots of theologies saying God is with the oppressed Godself suffers with us Godself protests against violence Godself was double-crossed for us the lost.

Lots of theologies but not much existentially gainfully painful encounter with the slaughtered Lamb of God whose heart beats between his bleats for us.

Sheep, goats, lambs and gurus - how many are going to Calvary? The place of the skull - or let's be honest to God: call it the place of skulduggery which is like saying the place of the skull and crossbones where body and soul are torn asunder as if a great blunder whether human or divine has occurred.

But hear the Word.

Sweat, tears, blood we cannot look upon the Lamb of God or God the Lamb slaughtered.

Why, how, when shall salvation come also for the crucified Lamb of God during this relentless Lent?

Silver-fleeced Lamb fleeced for thirty pieces now that you have lent your muscles, bones and marrow tears and ligament torn from ligament - teach us to repent in Lent every day with sorrow.

Our first toddling steps of eternal joy.

Frank Sawyer (sawyer@t-online.hu) has taught in seminaries in Latin America and Hungary for almost three decades. His webpage is <http://srta.tirek.hu/lap/sawyer>.

Frank Sawyer



Everyday Christian

Cathy Smith



Of license plates and God's speaking



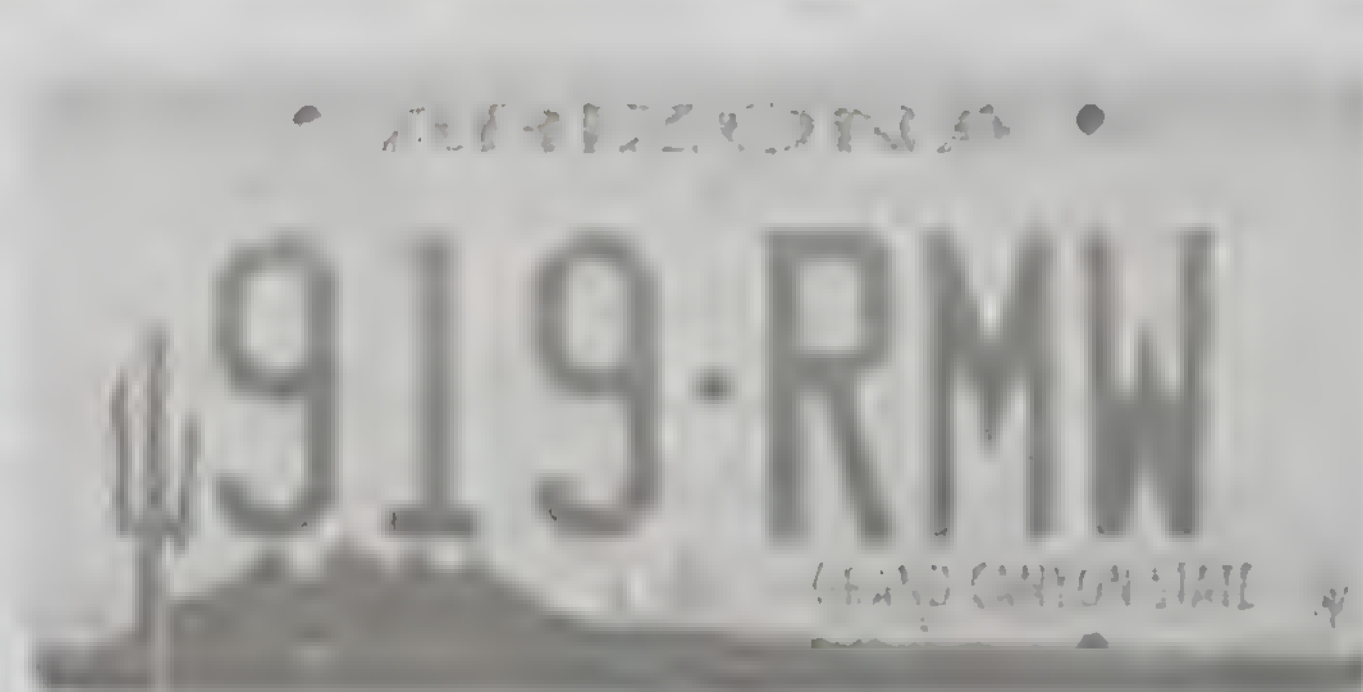
As I mentioned last month, I'm cautious about imbuing divine significance to trivial matters. But I'm also deeply convicted that God's divinity colours our world. He immerses himself in our lives and hears

our prayers. Sometimes you are simply called to bow before the incomprehensible, whether or not you call it a miracle.

I have a friend, Rod Hugen, a pastor in Arizona. Recently, he had some health issues that required a major and delicate operation on his neck. I prayed for him the night before his surgery.

The next morning I went to London to visit my grandchildren. We did crafts and played in the park. Later, I decided to take Amara, the older one, to Adventures on Wonderland, an indoor gym and arcade located on busy Wonderland Road. Amara was talkative as we drove, so I shushed her.

"Amara, there's a lot of traffic, and Grandma needs to pay attention to the road!" Suddenly a car switched lanes right in front of me, and I had to hit the brakes. Scared, I noticed the license plate ... a flash of blue and red, a cactus and *Grand Canyon State*.



Arizona! Immediately I thought about Rod. It was 1:34 p.m. I felt bad. His surgery had been scheduled for 10:30 a.m. I'd been so preoccupied with the kids that I hadn't remembered to pray. Still, no prayer is wasted, I thought. Maybe he's in recovery. I took a moment to pray again.

This struck me as a remarkable coincidence. Now you can see American plates on the 400 highways quite often, but you don't see Arizona plates in London every day. Was God reminding me to pray for Rod again? I'm not one who puts much stock in the timing or number or length or eloquence of prayers, all of which, when too self-conscious, feels like browbeating and bullying God. That's not what prayer is about. Prayer is the place where you learn to submit to God, not nag him. I had prayed for Rod the night before. God had heard me.

But believers are linked by way of

prayer, too, gathered in that unity we confess in Christ. The Apostles' Creed calls it the "communion of the saints," a far-flung and precious inheritance. For me, it's a kaleidoscope of holy images, flitting bits of cathedrals and sacraments, martyrs and icons, steeples and circuit riders, banana loaves and casseroles, chants and hymns, whirling mosaics spun with such fluid complexity that you can't really fathom how they hold together.

Could God really have been speaking to me through a license plate, summoning me to Rod's side at that particular moment?

The real adventure

I shared this incident with Rod. He wrote back to me:

I want to affirm the crazy license plate story. Those things often happen to me. I try to act on them because I think it is often how the Spirit moves. At 10:34 a.m. (1:34 p.m. your time) I recall being in the middle of a panic attack sitting in the room anticipating the surgery and having this intense desire to run away. For the moment I was scared. My wife had dropped me off at the door and my friend, David, was sitting with me while she searched for a parking place. He said

something about it being 10:30 and wondering when the surgery would actually be performed. His question raised all my fears and I remember (sort of) jokingly saying, "Maybe I should just leave now and forget the whole thing."

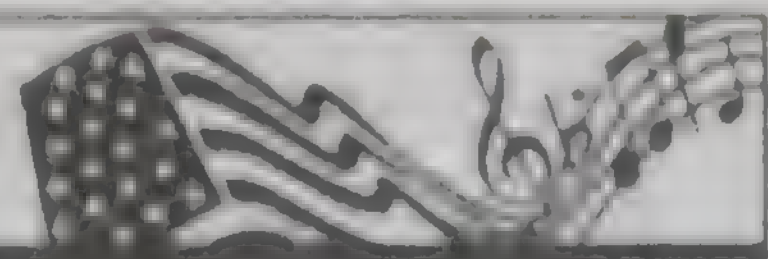
Here's the plot twist: I wasn't even aware of the difference in time zones. Humbling to admit, but true. When I prayed for Rod at 1:34 p.m., I thought his operation was done, but he was just going into surgery. The timing was immaculate. As the myriad translucent chips in the kaleidoscope shifted into place, I had this briefest glimpse of the incomprehensible... a pinhole view of a luminous design that folds the everyday world, where I take Amara to Adventures on Wonderland to spend a bunch of quarters at the arcade, into the Wonderland that is God's playground: Ontario, Arizona and every depth of time and space, where he spends himself in an epic adventure to show forth his glory.

Cathy Smith (cathy@christiancourier.ca) is features editor with CC. She lives in Wyoming, Ontario.

Columns

From the 11th Province

Marian Van Til



Are you the same person you were five or ten years ago? Twenty years ago? I'm not. I do have the same basic traits – the ones I inherited from my parents and from family lines stretching back several centuries into the Netherlands and Germany. My musical and writing abilities are gifts from my father's family. My stubbornness comes from both sides. (I like to call it being principled!) Intractability, it seems, may be a characteristic of more than one ethnic group. My husband, of Irish descent, likes to quip that the Dutch are stubborn but the Irish are resolute. Whatever it's called, adding to it, we joke, is the fact that we each had German mothers.

Some people don't change much over their lives, in personality or in thinking. Others change immensely. My husband, who had polio as a child and who now has post-polio syndrome, has been thoroughly shaped by that presence in his life (it is like a presence). Of course I don't know exactly what he would have been like had God had not given him such a handicap, but I do know that he accepted his circumstances with grace (divine) and graciousness (human) and developed into a gentle soul who is never self-pitying, and a model for others with such wounds.

Over the decades my own chronic illness has, I hope, also changed me for the better. I pray it has made me more patient, more compassionate of those who suffer, more understanding of those who struggle.

Sin is the deadly inherited human-family trait that we cannot change or eradicate through experience or self-will. At base we all need radical change from some other source. Only Christ's blood – divine genetics – will do.

'In the cross of Christ I glory'

In the church year we're currently halfway through Lent. Many Reformed Christians don't think about Lent. When I grew up in the 1950s and '60s, Lent was still entirely Roman Catholic to us. My minister dismissed it out of hand; my dad shuddered. But like people, churches change. The church is its people, after all. And as long as following a new path doesn't involve a relinquishing of the Gospel, the new road can improve our view. Observing Lent is a beneficial tradition, I think. Many Reformed churches now agree.

But Lent skeptics may ask: isn't it a bit much to wallow for at least five weeks in thoughts about Christ's death (think crucifix, not empty cross)? I think not, especially in our current era. In fact, contemplating Christ's suffering for an extended time is a much needed antidote to the self-satisfaction and superficiality of our modern world. And

'My song is Love unknown'

of course we "glory in" the cross of Christ, as the hymn says, because we see the Light at the end of the tunnel – at the door of the empty tomb.

It's all too easy in our time to be infected by the secular attitude that we're actually pretty good people. We're kind to our neighbours, we give to charity when we can, we live and let live. Who needs "salvation," anyway? (And why does Jesus have sole claim on saving us? That's awfully exclusive, isn't it? It's so distastefully un-Canadian.) We've come a long way from the barbaric practices of centuries ago, or even of 50 years ago. Humankind is smart, enlightened, the measure of all things.

I've encountered more than a few people who think along those lines. Apart from the working of the Spirit of Christ in their lives there's no way that I or anyone will convince them that they – like all of us – deserve God's wrath, and that apart from God in Christ we all perish.

Lenten observation from Ash Wednesday (March 9 this year) through Good Friday (April 22) is both communal and highly personal. It forces us as congregations, as individuals, to think deeply and carefully about why and how Christ died for us; for me. The natural outgrowth is renewed repentance and a marveling at such undeserved Love. Repentance then allows for conversion, the ultimate change in any person's life.

*My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?*

*Here might I stay and sing – no story so divine!
Never was love, dear King, never was grief like thine.
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend!*

Samuel Crossman, c. 1624-1683,
My Song is Love Unknown, stanzas 1,7

Marian Van Til (mvantil@roadrunner.com)
is a former CC editor living in
Youngstown, NY.

Words from Wild Horses

Kenny Warkentin



We have entered the season of Lent: a time to prepare and to meditate on the good work of Jesus on the cross. The sacrifice of a loving Father. Many people take the time to fast and pray, giving something up as a way to remind them of what the Father gave up as a sacrifice on the cross for them.

Four years ago, I went on a 40-day fast. It was challenging and life changing for me as my total dependence was now in Jesus' care. It was a time to offer God my messy house – my desires, needs and wants. I gave Jesus access to uncovered sin and the dust bunnies that remained in the corners of my heart. I had a deep hunger for more of Jesus, and I saw the need to offer him my cup that was full of stuff: struggles, fears, insecurities and things that just weren't important to me anymore.

So I gave up my fears, lying them all down at the cross. The fear of not loving well enough. The fears of not being enough for anyone, let alone God. Of being smothered emotionally, which stunted my ability to take risks in love. Fears that I would leave the healing journey that God had me on and the fear that I would be unable to be strong enough to fight temptations. In the midst of putting down my fears and emptying my cup, I was reminded that I would never be strong enough nor good enough in my own strength. That all of my strength comes from admitting my weakness, and in that admission Jesus became my strength.

Not by bread alone

When I was fasting, my body felt light headed, my stomach growled, my eyes teared up and my body ached. My body began to physically ache for water. I was thirsty both in the physical and the spiritual sense. As I gave up food, I was hungry. So I ate the word. God became my provision, my food, my source of all the good things that I needed. It also brought my sins to the surface. As soon as I gave up food and my own ability to comfort myself or nourish myself, it was as if God put a spotlight on issues of sin, highlighting my struggles in ways that at times were overwhelming. This was especially true in the area of my struggle with same gender attraction. Sometimes during the fast I would just cry out to God, "Quickly, take this cup of mine!" I felt that I could no longer take this battle, this war, this fight against spirit and flesh. I know that the flesh in this world is strong.

Take this cup

The desires, the pulls, the wants, the thoughts... they had often led me to places I no longer wished to travel. Yet I stood my ground. I stood even when I did not feel like standing and I cried out to God, the giver of all good things, and I cried out for mercy and grace to make it one more day. I gave him my cup, my weaknesses for him to bear, rather than continually being weighed down by the heaviness of the struggle. Does this sound like I was denying myself? Like I was weak and utterly foolish? You better believe it!



Praying at Gethsemane by Asian artist Ha Jin.

Without God, I am nothing. Without his saving me and leading me to a better place, I would surely have perished.

Wanting God's fullness

For me, Lent is a reminder to deny myself, to count everything else as second best when it comes to my heart's first desire. Do I get it right all the time? Nope, but I am trying. I am desiring more of Jesus and what it means to lay everything down. Even when my struggle begins to overwhelm me, when issues of sin creep in, I cry out to God to take this struggle from me, asking him to relieve me, to provide for me in the ways I need in every area of my life. When I feel like I am losing it at every turn, when there are battles left, right and centre, I cry out to God to teach me, mould me and make me who he wants me to be. When I cry out, "Take this cup"... it is a cry of freedom and it is a cry of hope. It is a cry of wanting more of God and less of me.

Kenny Warkentin (kennyp66@gmail.com) works full time as an urban missionary with Living Waters Canada and is an artist and musician. He lives in Winnipeg with his wife and daughter.

Columns

Our World Today

Bert Hielema



Researchers at the University of Michigan found that when misinformed people (particularly political partisans, fundamental religious believers and those with a vested interest in the status quo) were exposed to corrected facts in news stories, they rarely changed their minds. On the contrary, they often became even more strongly set in their beliefs: the truth did not set them free. Call me a pessimist for seeing great dangers confronting our world today, but I think the most serious one is our refusal to face reality. That blindness concerns events such as climate change, peak oil, food scarcity and over-population. Rather than seeing the Scriptures as the light to guide us through God's creation, many stare into that light until it blinds them from seeing what's happening in the world around them.

All this is bad news for the next generation, because we are leaving our youth with an unimaginable mess, and for this my generation owes them the deepest possible apology. In North Africa and the Middle East, the young are rising up in the millions – tired of a future that is fading before their eyes, thanks to rapidly disappearing oil and food.

Dear kids,
Sorry.

If you imagine a tall apple tree with much low-hanging fruit, then my generation did the easy picking. Even so, we wasted about one-third of the crop; after all, there was so much it. Now, when it is the next generation's turn, harvesting the remainder will take life-threatening effort because strong winds have blown off the majority of the higher fruit.

This metaphor applies to our treatment of most minerals, including soil, and the world's water supply. The result is that we are faced with two mutually enforcing trends: ever higher energy costs and ever greater difficulties in reaching the needed commodities. The easy-to-access fuel is long gone, which is why Canada's tar-sands are thriving. Australia can now readily export its secondary, even more polluting, coal resources to China – with ominous consequences for the planet. A study by Dr. Paul Epstein of Harvard Medical School finds that the full lifecycle expense of extracting and burning coal is

more costly and damaging than previously known: an estimated \$345 billion annually in health, environmental and other costs in the United States alone. It would be at least double that for China. The direct financial outlay, the report reveals, adds close to 18 cents for every kilowatt hour of electricity generated from coal, which is still electricity's main energy source. It's another burden on the shoulders of our youth.



Unwanted facts

It is not the quantity of minerals, fuel, potash, nickel or gold that is important; it is the quality that matters. In other words, what we are seeing now is that the energy needed to maintain our way of life increases exponentially as distances are greater, as ore quality is less and as processing is more energy intensive, until the entire procedure reaches a point where it is no longer economical.

Of course, the crucial point hinges on the amount of fossil fuels left. Thanks to Wikileaks, which obtained telegrams from

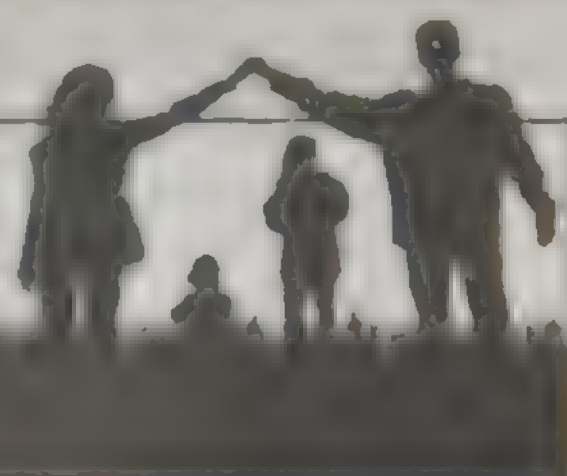
the American embassy in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh, we now know that Saudi oil reserves were overstated by as many as 300 billion barrels. That is 10 years of the entire world's consumption! *The Guardian*, which published the memo, wrote that "The world is much closer to running out of oil than official estimates had assumed."

In spite of these warnings many people have hung a "Do Not Disturb Us with the Facts" sign on their foreheads. Instead they pick and choose only the items that will serve in walling them off from uncomfortable truths. The future belongs to those who prepare for it. Not preparing means that the real victims are the world's young people, who have been made to believe that their future will be rosy. It now dawns on them that we have failed to tell them the truth, because we found it too difficult to face it ourselves. No wonder they are rising up in protest.

Bert Hielema has written two new books, *The Shortest Day*, based on Matthew 24:22, and its sequel *Day Without End*, envisioning the meaning of "I believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting." To order, go to bert@hielema.ca.

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove



"Care for elderly parents often divisive for siblings, study suggests."

Derek Abma, The Vancouver Sun.

Q. I am married, in midlife, with two young adults still at home. My intuition tells me life is not going to become easier in the years to come because my parents, both in their early 80s, are beginning to need help with their medication and some basic personal care. Two siblings are living in town, two are on the outskirts of town and two are scattered across the country. I live 30 minutes away from my parents. We are seven adult children in total.

I am the youngest in my group of friends and most of them are in the midst of caregiving their parents in some form. When I listen to them they seem so entangled with their adult siblings far or near that I want to prepare myself and avoid as many pitfalls as possible. I also believe I may be the designated caregiver in my family since my parents took care of both of my children for two years. Consequently, it seems I may be closer to my parents since they talk most aspects of their lives over with me. My spouse also seems to talk more readily with my father than some of my siblings. Overall, any suggestions you may have concerning my situation would be appreciated.

A. Many boomers (as well as their parents) are struggling with this new developmental stage in their lives. In previous generations one in ten may have reached the age of 65. Now many of us may well become 85 and over while suffering chronic health conditions or dementia of various kinds. Consequently, I suggest you become informed about this stage in your parents' as well as your own lives, since knowledge brings confidence.

Although our medical system is different from the one in the United States, the book *My Mother, Your Mother: Embracing 'slow medicine,' the compassionate approach to caring for your aging loved ones*, by D. McCulloch gave me the most confidence in understanding late and even later aging.

**A new developmental stage:
knowledge brings confidence
but meaning brings resilience.**

Since you have a number of siblings I would suggest you read *They're Your Parents Too! How siblings can survive their parents' aging without driving each other crazy*, by F. Russo. This book gives a hint of the complexity of the emotional dynamics

Meaning makes the difference

between siblings during this final developmental stage in our family of origin.

Lastly, I also suggest you read *Caregiving: the Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss and Renewal*, by B. Witrogen McLeod. The author believes hands-on caregiving is profoundly intimate and life-changing for those who take on the job. Her book has become a caregiver's companion not only because her writing brings out the helping heart in her readers, but also because it provides a sense of community with caregivers who have walked this gritty path before us.

Finally, don't forget to check out your community for helpful online education and support.

And here are a few more hands-on hints.

*As much as possible do not focus on what siblings do wrong. Rather, pay attention to how you respond.

*If your parents are still of sound mind, now is the time to encourage them to be clear about their plan for care as they are aging.

*If parents need care, discuss with siblings what is understood by 'good enough care' and 'compassionate care.'

*If you see trouble looming between siblings, suggest hiring a facilitator to manage family meetings.

**THEY'RE
YOUR
PARENTS,
TOO!**



A study worth remembering has been done in the Vancouver area. Researchers acknowledge that providing care for a person with dementia can be challenging. Faced with comparable demands, some caregivers become overwhelmed early in the course of supporting a person with dementia, while others cope successfully for many years under remarkable strains. So researchers asked the question: What enables some caregivers to adapt to the significant stressors of this role? They discovered those caregivers who found meaning in their caregiving (beyond the obvious need for care) and had consistent family and social support were more resilient in their role. This, of course, begs the question . . . what meaning do we as Christians give to caring for our aging parents? And do Christian families and communities actually provide caregivers with consistent support?

Arlene Van Hove (avanhove@shaw.ca) is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC.

News

Japanese churches respond to earthquake-tsunami disaster



A wall of water descending on a populated area.

Hisashi Yukimoto

TOKYO, Japan (ENI news) Churches across Japan are responding with prayers, donations, and relief operations to the impacts of the March 11 earthquake and its subsequent tsunamis and nuclear power plant accidents. More than 400,000 people have been evacuated from the disaster zones in northeastern Japan.

Four days after the quake, the first meeting of the interdenominational Earthquake Christian Disaster Centre was held at the United Church of Christ in Japan's (UCCJ) Northeast District Centre in Sendai near the epicentre. The UCCJ also said church members, including moderator the Rev. Hideo Ishibashi, are visiting disaster areas. The denomination's two local congregations near the Fukushima nuclear power plants were evacuated to one of them but are unable to escape from there, the report said. Caritas Japan, part of the Roman Catholic Church, has launched a national donation campaign and is working with dioceses and Caritas Internationalis to support disaster victims, according to its website. The National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), a grouping of Anglican, Protestant and interdenominational organizations, is asking for emergency relief donations. "We are coordinating

particularly hard-hit, as well as with other denominations. The Anglican-Episcopal Church in Japan has set up relief headquarters at its office in Tokyo. The Japan Baptist Union (JBU) reported on March 15 that one of its members and the grandmother of another member were killed and the house of another member was washed away by the tsunami. The JBU and the Okinawa Baptist Convention are working with a team from Baptist World Aid for their relief operations. The Russian Orthodox Church also announced fairly quickly that it started fundraising to help the Orthodox communities in Japan and the earthquake victims. The YWCA of Japan is calling for donations to support victims and survivors, particularly "women, children, elderly and those who are marginalized," as well as calling for the shutdown of nuclear power plants in Niigata and Shizuoka in central Japan that the group says "are within the area where there are risks of aftershocks and another earthquake." The Japan Evangelical Alliance and its member Protestant churches and organizations, such as the Salvation Army of Japan, the Japan Alliance Christ Church, World Vision Japan, the Japan Evangelical Church Association, Jesus Christ Church in Japan, are also engaged with relief operations, communicating through Facebook, websites and the online information board of a Japanese Christian news

a network of local support for those most severely affected," said the Rev. Isamu Koshiishi, the council's moderator. The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has released a pastoral letter calling for donations to be sent to the NCCJ via the CCA Emergency Fund. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church said it is working on relief operations with its two congregations in Sendai, a city



Grief and shock as the devastation is realized.

CRWRC joins local efforts in Japan

In the face of the devastation Japan faces, CRWRC will partner immediately, on the ground, with an established network of international Christian partners and alliances including "Christian Relief, Assistance, Support, and Hope," or CRASH Japan. Initial plans for a longer-term response to address housing reconstruction and possibly livelihood rehabilitation are also being made through a coalition of Christian churches and organizations.

Wayne de Jong, CRWRC director for relief and rehabilitation, is currently in Indonesia and says staff are closely monitoring developments in Japan. "We are working toward best utilizing our financial resources and disaster response programming options in both immediate and long-term responses," de Jong says. CRWRC will act in cooperation with Christian Reformed World Missions and Back To God Ministries International in longer-term rehabilitation.

— CRWRC Newsroom

For more updates on CRC staff in Japan, go to crcna.org/japan.

publisher named The Christians. The World Conference of Religions for Peace, the world's largest multi-religious coalition, has begun to collect donations, along with its Japanese committee, to

support municipalities in the affected areas and non-governmental organizations that are conducting rescue operations. ➤

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ARTHUR AND GRACE STELPSTRA (nee Sijbesma)

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Obituaries

MARIA MATHILDA GEUZE BROEK (nee Luitingh)

Feb. 1, 1907 Feb. 16, 2011
Andijk, NL Lindsay, Ont.



Maria Geuzebroek passed away peacefully on Monday March 7, 2011 at Mill Creek Care Centre, Barrie, surrounded by loving family. Maria was 95 years old.

Beloved wife of the late Reverend Jac Geuzebroek, formerly a minister in several Christian Reformed Churches in Ontario.

Survived by her dear sons Tony Gainsbrook (Anne) Jack (Johanna) John (Anne) and Arnold Gainsbrook (Jean)

She proudly loved her grandchildren, Jennifer, Stephanie, Theresa, James, Gina, Julie, Matthew, Michael, Lauren, Eric, and eleven great-grandchildren.

A funeral celebration was held at the Steckley-Gooderham Funeral Home, on Thursday March 10, 2011.

Contact information: Tony Gainsbrook PO Box 7096 Innisfil ON L9S 1A8 gainsbrook@gmail.com

GRACE WILMS (nee Vriend)

went to be with the Lord at the age of 104.

She was predeceased by her husband John Wilms and daughter Margaretha Johanna.

Grace was the loving mother of Jim Wilms (Grace) Nell deBoer (John) Winnie VanderBorgh Anna VanHalteren (Tymen) Bill Wilms (Lena) John Wilms Richard Wilms (Cora)

She is also survived by 33 grandchildren, 67 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

The funeral was held on Feb. 21. Interment was at Riverside Cemetery, Lindsay.

Donations may be made to: Heritage Christian School 159 Colborne St W Lindsay ON K9V 5Z8

Correspondence: Wm Wilms 388 Angeline St. N. Lindsay ON K9V 4R1

Obituary

HENRY DE JONG

(February 7, 1932 - March 3, 2011) passed away peacefully into Glory at his home in Baltimore, Ontario.

He will be greatly missed by his loving wife, Jane (Greydanus) deJong and their children, Evelyn & John Brinkman, Liz & Cor Mollema, Teo (deceased) & Linda deJong, Lil & Rod Weenink, Mike & Jodi deJong, and Marj deJong and David Busby, and their 26 Grandchildren & 15 Great-grandchildren.

The godly always give generous loans to others, and their children are a blessing.
Psalm 37:26 (NLT)

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Helen & John Ysselstein
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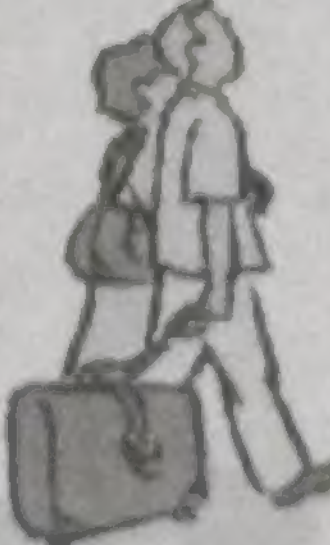
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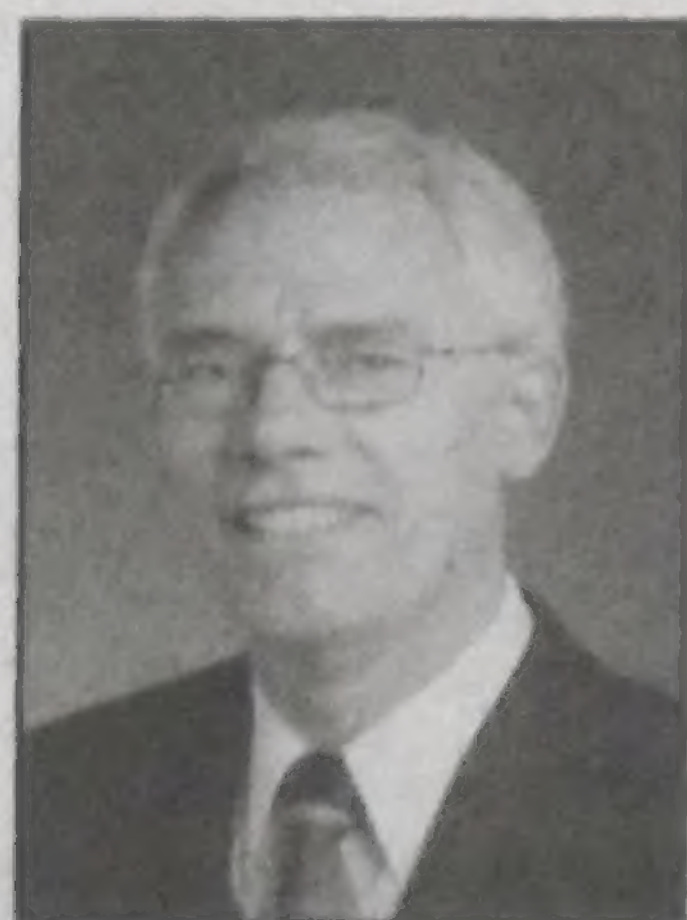
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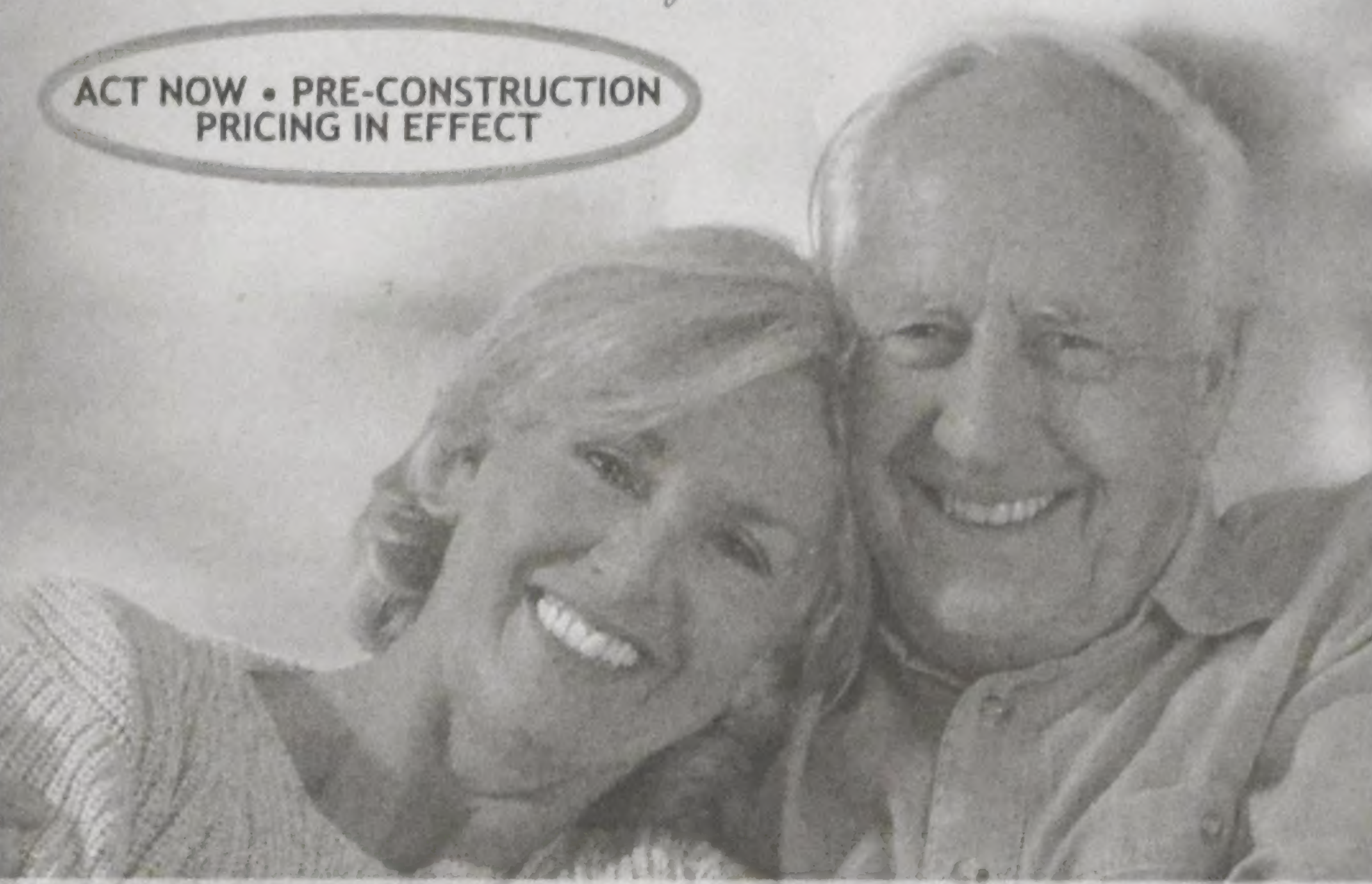
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar 25 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group presents *Vell kabaal op 'Clingendael'* Dutch Canadian Hall, **London, Ont** at 8 pm. For more information, call 519 283 6285 or 519 424 2985. See ad Feb 14 issue.**Mar 25** Benefit Concert: *Change of Scene*, a vocal band, will be performing the music of the **Gaither Gospel Group** at Rehoboth CRC, Bowmanville, ON, Friday night, 7:30, \$15.00. All proceeds to benefit NILDCanada. For more information, please contact dvandemeent@knoxchristian.com or www.nildcanada.org**Apr 2** Niagara region CCBF conference at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont. Progressive Conservative Party Leader Tim Hudak will be the keynote speaker. Registration is available online at ccbf.org See article p. 22 Feb 28 issue.**Apr 9** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group presents *Vell kabaal op 'Clingendael'* Great Lakes Christian College, **Beamsville, Ont.** at 2 pm. For more information, call 519 283 6285 or 519 424 2985 or see ad Feb 14 issue.**Apr 8-10** Marriage Encounter weekend. **London, Ont.** Register at www.reformedme.org**Apr 10** Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching. DVDs are available**Apr 10** The Georgetown Bach Chorale concert. See ad for details.**Apr 12** Talking Book Library Open House: 4-7 pm at 3844 Stouffville Rd, Stouffville. The Talking Book Library is a national program funded by cbm Canada (formerly Christian Blind Mission). It provides over 2,000 audio books of high quality Christian material to Canadians with blindness or print disabilities, free of charge. See cbmcanada.org/tbl for more information.**Apr 16** Guelph Community Christian School, formerly known as John Calvin Christian School, is celebrating 50 years of nurturing, educating and inspiring children. All former staff and students are invited to attend celebration festivities. For more information please contact us by phone 519-824-8860 or email 50celebrations@guelphccs.ca Check us out on the web <http://www.guelphccs.ca/50th.html>.Discover St. Catharines New Christian Lifestyle Community
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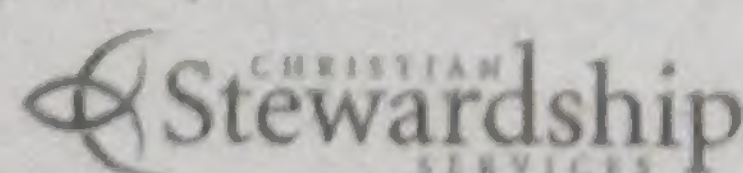
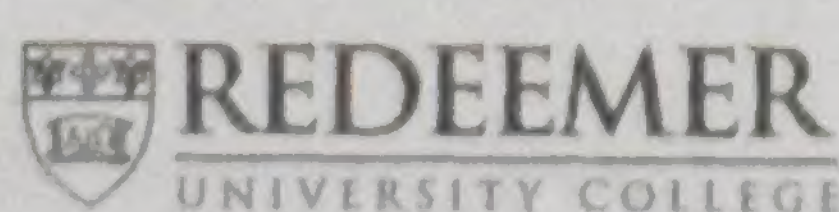
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News

Homes that build each other up: Five kinds of communal living in Hamilton

Hendrik Vlaar

We are living in a new age of Christendom. Over the past decade, the ambitious among us have been re-thinking what it means to live out the gospel within the context of an increasingly modernized world. To many, this has meant living within a shared community of believers. Drawing upon and inspired by the works of Shane Claiborne, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and New Testament examples, many of these communities have committed to sharing financial resources, belongings and spaces between their members.

The city of Hamilton, Ontario, has been, and continues to be, a seedbed of intentional Christian community. Many of the leaders behind the movement have been students of Redeemer University College, a Christian educational institution which focuses on ensuring students belong to a "caring, thriving and vibrant community." Life in a Christian educational community is a formative experience for many young believers, and it provides the tools necessary for future communal living and ministry.

One great example of this Christian ministry is found within the home of several young women in Hamilton's Gibson neighbourhood. Having been part of a larger community established by Redeemer graduates and their friends, Danielle, Tracy, Esther and

Gloria have built a home of love and peace which acts as a safe haven for the neighbourhood's young girls. While the larger community was only a one-year project, the women continue to inhabit their humble dwelling, advocating for the neighbourhood's young girls who have been pushed to the fringes.

Finding nourishment

The Guise St. House, located above Hamilton's poorest North End neighbourhood, also follows the intentional community trend. Here, four Redeemer friends discussed, for a year, their frustrations with Western culture: a lifestyle of excess with the pains of an unsustainable workload. In response, they flipped the cultural norm on its head, and decided to live, and work, in ways that are socially, physiologically and economically sustainable. Living together provided the benefits of reduced individual living costs, while creating a place, in Guise St. member Shawn Groen's words, "to build each other up, that we may be more equipped to bless other people."

This outward focus that has been the driving principle of the Common Life community, located in Hamilton's Kirkendall neighbourhood. Similar to Guise St. in its economic principles, several young families seek to take initiative in fostering commu-



This prayer group is a light in the infamous Barton St. area of Hamilton.

nity amongst their neighbours. They pray together, study together, eat together and worship together. One member, Katrina Vandenberg, started a community garden, which has become a shared space of work and conversation. One member, Graham Cubitt, has described the community as a "test ground for the kingdom of God."

Creating community

The Barton St. Collective is a bit of a different tale, as it is more of a happenstance collective rather than a community with a prescribed vision. Riddled with crack houses, prostitutes, abandoned buildings and abandoned people, Barton Street is notorious throughout the city for being a place of despair and visible brokenness. Over time, members of the Barton Collective decided to shine God's light into the darkness of that neighbourhood. This shining has included a crack-addicted prostitute giving her life to Christ and sobering up, even if only for a little while, and a rejected young man finding solace and peace amidst the comfort of brothers. In this community, guests and strangers are enfolded within the comforting arms of peace and brotherly love.

This peace is written into the very mandate of another well-known Hamilton community, l'Arche. Emma-Jane Cohen, a Redeemer alumnus and former l'Arche assistant, says that her experience was one of seeing people with developmental disabilities move from a place of chaos to a place of peace. While these communities are, indeed, a place of challenge, calling members out of their individual spaces of comfort to enter into each other's space, they are also enclaves of great intimacy, warmth and love.

Living out the Kingdom

These profiles are merely a sample of what is happening in Hamilton. While these five communities have experienced the joy that comes with fruitfulness, they have also experienced the pains of disappointment, loss and grief. To live in community is to live with real individuals in desperate need of grace. While communities hold the potential for great joy and success, they also hold the potential for great failure. To live successfully in community, Graham Cubitt says we need to "get beyond ourselves;" in other words, we need to let some things go.

Commitment is also crucial. As one Guise St. member notes, "While intentions are good and necessary, they are only as valuable as the commitment that supports them." Finally, community is rooted in love. l'Arche assistant, Emma-Jane, says that "God calls us to love each other when it's not easy. The love you have with people in community is a deep love [which] develop[s]."

Much like our own families, and our own churches, communities will experience the highs and lows of living together. When it comes to studying, writing about, and living in community, there are no simple lessons to be learned – no neatly packaged morals. Rather, there are truths to be lived – to "know God, love each other, and love others." It is this that Christians are called to. And they are called to do it together, in Hamilton and all over God's world.

Hendrik Vlaar (hendrik.vlaar@gmail.com) lives and works in Hamilton, Ont. He's a board member of Micah Challenge Canada.



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